



The Historiographer

of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut

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FIND SHEDS LIGHT ON EARLY U.S. DAYS

Unused London Documents
Tell of Church Feuds in
13 Original Colonies

LONDON, Jan. 17—(Reuters)—A mass of untouched information about American colonial history before the War of Independence (1775-81) awaits classification and analysis at Lambeth Palace, the London residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

It is hoped that some United States University or learned society will one day send over

and maintain a scholar to undertake the work.

In forty large cardboard boxes there are 2,000 to 3,000 letters and documents relating to the time when the Anglican Church in the original thirteen colonies was without a Bishop of its own and was under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London.

Here are almost unused sources for a completely new history of the Episcopal Church in America. They show what the early missionaries thought about social and political problems at a time when, as a minority church, they faced much opposition from the Presbyterian and Quaker dissenters.

One missionary wrote to the Bishop of London in 1698 that he had gone to Philadelphia from Jamaica in the hope of finding "ye same wholesome laws" as "in other of His Majesty's plantations." But the

people were "in brangle among themselves, imprisoning one another for religion." He accused Quaker justices of being "violent against all that are not Quakers, even to death."

Samuel Johnson, a well-known American clergyman of the period, wrote in 1728 that he had been preaching at New Haven (Connecticut), "where the college is." "I hope," he added, "that in a few years there will be a large congregation there."

In 1765, Mr. Johnson, summing up for the Bishop of London "the true state of religion in America," said that "the independents, or congregationalists as they call themselves here in New England, especially in Massachusetts and Connecticut, have established themselves by law, without any regard to the King's supremacy in matters of religion."

NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, JANUARY 18, 1959.

DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

OF

Vol. I.

The Protestant Episcopal Church,

IN THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

CONTAINING NUMEROUS HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED DOCUMENTS CONCERNING THE CHURCH IN

CONNECTICUT.

[Pages 102—215]

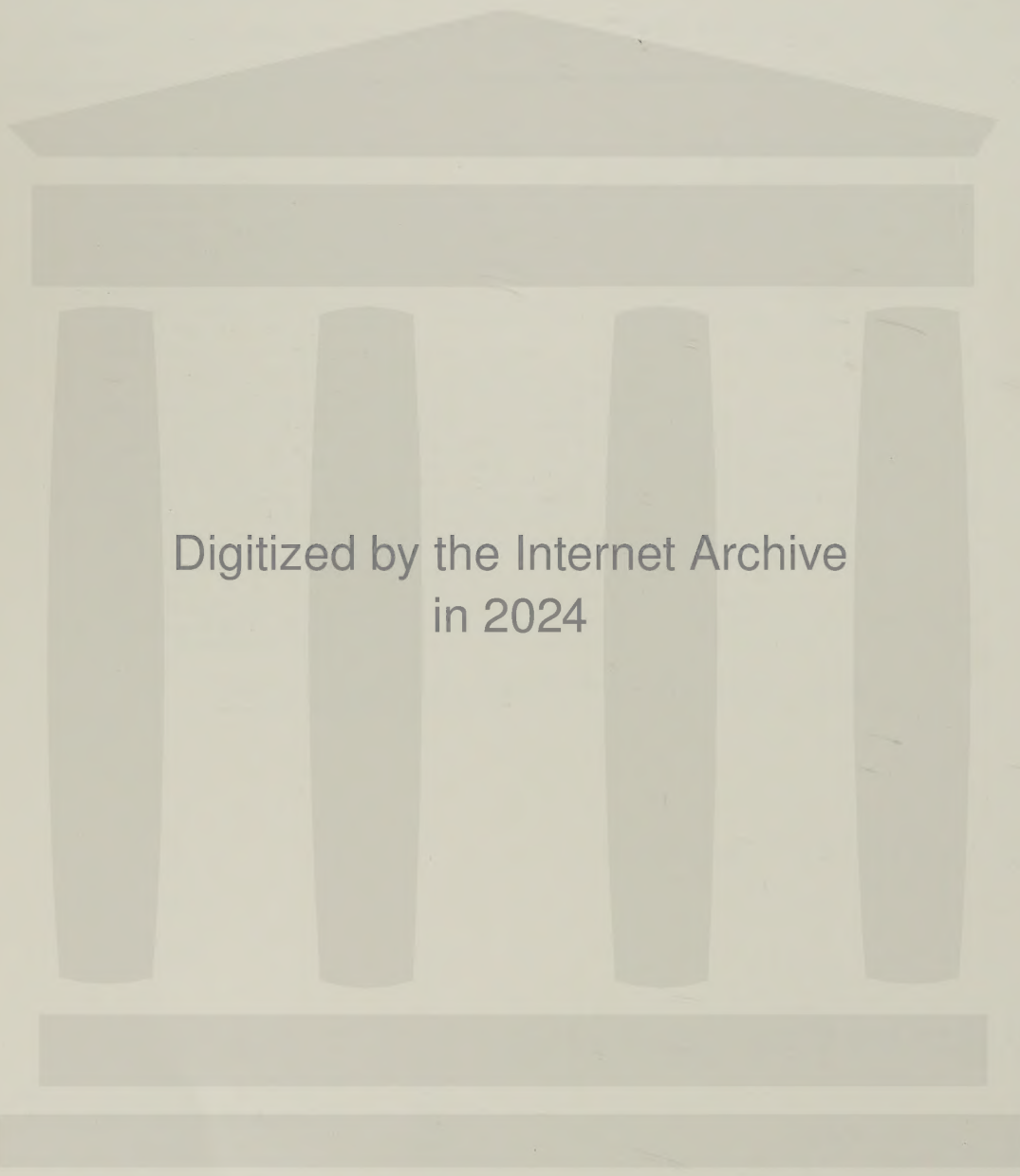
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WILLIAM STEVENS PERRY, A. M.,

EDITORS.

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[*Rev. Mr. Johnson to the Bishop of London.*]

Stratford in Connecticut, New-England,
November 4th, 1725.

May it please your Lordship,

I had the honour of your Lordship's letter of June 23d, full of a great deal of kindness and condescension, for which I now return your Lordship my most humble thanks, and particularly for your prayers and good wishes for my preservation and success in my work, which (I thank God) is as great as can be expected, in the midst of the many discouragements and low circumstances which the Church labours under. It is a great satisfaction to us to understand, that one of your Lordship's powerful interest and influence, is engaged in so good a work as that of sending Bishops into America, and that there is nothing you desire more or would be at greater pains to compass. This gives us the greatest hopes, that by your Lordship's pious endeavours, under the blessing of God and the benign influence of our most gracious King, it may, at length, be accomplished. And we humbly hope, that the address and representation of the state of religion here, which we have lately presumed to offer, may, in your Lordship's hands, be of some service in this affair. I pray God give it success.

Your Lordship informs me of Governor Shute's account of the method of Independent ministers settling themselves in particular towns. My Lord, I never took this to be the case in any part of New-England, for I never understood that there were any ministers maintained by subscriptions of each particular parishioner. Indeed, I cannot be positive how it is in Boston Government, though I am apt to think that it is, at least, far from being a general practice there, and I am well assured that there is no such thing here. Your Lordship desires to know exactly how it is, and promise to do us what service you can, for which we are very thankful.

That your Lordship may not wholly depend on my represen-

tation of it, but may have an exact knowledge of the state of this government from themselves, I have presumed to trouble your Lordship with all the public transactions of this colony about the affairs of religion; and because all their authority depends on the charter granted to them by King Charles the 2d, I have laid before your Lordship a printed copy of that charter, by which it does not appear, that ever it was the King's design to give them *any* authority about *ecclesiastical* affairs, or in any manner to enable them to establish any way of religion different from, much less in opposition to, the Church of England, by law established in all his Majesty's dominions. For which reason I cannot understand how it came to pass that they ever undertook to establish any religion, as your Lordship will observe, by their laws, they have done; which, therefore, seems to me to be repugnant to the laws of England. Your Lordship has here likewise for the more full understanding of the laws here transcribed, the Articles of Faith and Church Government, which are what they call the established religion of this country, though they fall very much short of acting up to them, and greatly disagree among themselves about them. But as to settling ministers and supporting them, the general practice of the colony is according to these laws, which is not by *subscription*, but by a major vote, both for the person chosen and the annual support he is to have. But as for the Church people of this colony, I know not of any of them that were ever concerned in voting for any of these ministers, or for their support; and I know that many have entered their protests, and desired to be excused from being in any way concerned, because of their belonging to and being obliged to pay to the support of the Church of England. And, as for others that may at any time come over to us, from their side, I would submit it to your Lordship whether it be not hard and unreasonable that they should be obliged to continue to pay to them, merely because they are overruled by a majority, when at the same time they are persuaded in their consciences that it is safer to retire into the unity of the Church, than to live and die in a state of schism and separation from her. I beg leave further to let your Lordship know that the Govern-

ment here, putting a very wrong construction on your Lordship's letter, are rather encouraged to go on in persecuting people for their taxes, than to desist, because, they say, your Lordship begs pardon, if you have desired any thing inconsistent with the laws of this government. As to the plate, books, &c., your Lordship offers certain questions, and desires me and the people of Stratford to be clear upon these subjects. My Lord, had it been possible to be clear upon those heads, we should never have offered to trouble your Lordship about them. As to myself, it is impossible for me to be clear either one way or the other, having been a stranger to the whole affair. I hear the account the Narragansett people give of it, and that may be right for aught I know. Stratford people give another account of it, but neither side produces any evidence where the original property was lodged. All the papers relating to this matter were lost. I have impartially inquired of the people of Stratford, and cannot satisfy them that ever the things controverted were appropriated to any place, till Bishop Compton's order fixed them here. I have inquired also of all the clergy in Boston, Rhode Island and New-York; and can find nobody that can give any light in the matter, unless it be Col. Nicholson, who undoubtedly knows the true state of it, and my people are willing to resign them, if it appears from his account of it that they were, in the design of the donor, appropriated to Narragansett. If your Lordship shall think fit to inform yourself from him concerning this matter, and give us the least hint of your pleasure, we shall submit.

In the mean time, things lying, as they do, in the dark, we have as an expedient for peace yielded to a division, and above a year ago sent all the books thither, in hopes that our so doing may satisfy our brethren at Narragansett, unless it should plainly appear from Col. Nicholson that they were originally given to that Church. However, I earnestly desire, with your Lordship, that no religious offices may by any means be maintained at the expense of plain justice and equity. Forgive, my Lord, this tediousness, and impute it to my earnest desire and endeavour that your Lordship may have a satisfactory answer to your letter, which I could not contrive in a

less compass; and permit me still to have an interest in your Lordship's favourable thoughts and benediction.

I am, my Lord, your Lordship's humble servant,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

[*Rev. Mr. Johnson to the Secretary.*]

Stratford, August 14th, 1725.

Reverend Sir,

I have not much to inform the honourable Society of, besides what is contained in the general representation of our case, which we jointly offered at our last meeting, and which, I conclude, will come to your hands before this arrives. My congregations, especially at Stratford, Fairfield and New-London increase, but not so fast, by a great deal, as they would if it were not that all worldly motives are against the Church. I can observe, however, that a good opinion of her doctrines, government and liturgy gains greatly in the minds of people, and especially those of the soberer and better sort; a serious sense of religion visibly increases among my own people, and juster notions of religion daily propagate among others, who are kept back by their teachers and friends from appearing for the Church. Sundry of the young candidates for the ministry repair to me frequently for books and conversation upon religious subjects, and many, I hope in time, especially if there were a Bishop here, may enter into the Church's service. I have baptised within the last half-year twenty-eight, whereof five are adults, and one of them a negro-man, and admitted thirteen to the Holy Communion. But those who come to Church are generally of the poorer sort, and unable to contribute any thing worth mentioning to my support; some are unable to buy any books, and would therefore be exceeding thankful to the honourable Society for a few prayer-books, if it were but ten or a dozen, with a few sheets of catechisms, with Lewis' or Sing's Exposition. Ostervald's Catechism is a book likewise which poor people

thirst after very much; and, indeed, these books are not to be had in this country, even if they had money to purchase them.

I am, Reverend Sir, the Society's much obliged,

And your most humble servant,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

P. S.—The Church at Fairfield goes on a pace, and New-London people are likewise going to build with all expedition. I have got considerable subscriptions, and a piece of land to set it on.

[Governor Talcott to the Bishop of London.]

Hartford, July 27th, 1726.

Right Reverend Sir,

I had the favour and honour of your Lordship's letter of June 3d, 1725, with the copy of the former sent to Boston. I readily embrace the opportunity to let your Lordship know the true state of the Church in this, his Majesty's government in this colony of Connecticut, and that by letter dated December 1st, 1725,* but being now informed the ship that letter went in was lost, with all, save the lives of the persons, I held myself obliged to inform your Lordship by this second letter, that there is but one Church of England minister in this colony, and the Church with him have the same protection as the rest of our Churches, and are under no constraint to contribute to the support of any other minister. There are some few persons in another town or two, that have stipulated with the present ministers now living in said towns, (which persons cannot be much recommended for

* A copy of this letter (December 1st, 1725,) is among the MSS. of the Connecticut Historical Society, (No. 102, Talcott MSS.,) and we have been favoured with a copy of it. As we learn from the letter we here print, which we obtained from the *Fulham* MSS., that of December 1st never reached its destination. On a comparison of the Connecticut copy with our own, we find that, with the addition of a single explanatory fact, the two copies agree. Ours is a duplicate, sent because the ship that took the first was lost.

† From this point the letters agree almost *verbatim*.

their zeal for religion or morality,) who cannot well be judged to act from any other motive than to appear singular, or to be freed from a small tax, and have declared themselves to be of the Church of England; and some of them that live 30 or 40 miles from where the Church of England's minister lives; these have made some objections against their customary contribution to their proper minister, under whose administration they have equal privileges with their neighbours.

The law of this colony is such, that the major part of the householders in every town shall determine their minister's maintenance, and all within the precincts of the town shall be obliged to pay their parts in an equal proportion to their estates in said towns or societies; and so in the precincts of each ecclesiastical society. Under this security, all our towns and ecclesiastical societies are supplied with orthodox ministers. We have no vacancies at present. When the death of the incumbent happens, they are quickly supplied by persons of our own communion, educated in our public schools of learning; which, through the Divine blessing afforded us, we have a sufficiency of those that are both learned and exemplary in their lives. I beg your Lordship's pardon, and am with great observance,

Your Lordship's most humble servant,

JOSEPH TALCOTT.

NOTE.—Of course, it will not be forgotten that the governor was a Congregationalist, and naturally viewed the Church with distrust and suspicion, not to say dislike.

[Rev. Mr. Johnson to the Bishop of London.]

Stratford, New-England, Feb'y 10th, 1726-7.

May it please your Lordship,

I must confess that I am ashamed thus to tire your Lordship's patience with complaints of this nature; neither should I have given you this trouble, but at the importunity of the

distressed people whose names (some of them) you behold at the foot of the inclosed address to your Lordship. It was their own contrivance to fail into this method. The complaint was drawn up, and some of the persons were in prison before I was sent for. Upon their request I came to the prison, and found it full of them, and an insulting mob about them. I administered what comfort I could to them, but I wish your Lordship, or some of your sacred character, could have been by to behold the contempt and indignity which our holy religion here suffers among an ungrateful people. It could not fail to excite your utmost zeal and compassion; and I assure your Lordship, the Church here is in a gasping condition, though, indeed, our people bear it with as much meekness and patience as can be expected. I venture so far upon my hopes of the success of your Lordship's concern and endeavour for us, as to promise them before our enemies that they should find relief; and if after all this we fail, there will remain no more hope, or good to be done here. Your Lordship required me in one of your letters to let you know particularly the state of things in the country. Accordingly, besides what I have formerly informed you of, I would further observe to your Lordship, that some of the errors which in the course of my ministry, I have to encounter, are the same with many of the principles of the book called "The Rights of the Christian Church;" errors so great and so subversive of all religion, that I make no doubt but that your Lordship, (whatever may be suggested to you to the contrary,) will not only justify my faithful and honest endeavours, made with a temper becoming Christianity, to undeceive the unhappy people; but likewise think it to very good purpose, that I, or some body of better capacity, (and I hope, ere long, more than one,) should be supported in these parts to guard what little flock we have against such dissolute principles. Absolute lay ordination is the avowed principle of some of the chief of their ministers, and has been frequently practiced in the country, and even in this town, though now, of late, their ministers generally ordain; but the people claim a share of authority with their ministers in all public acts of discipline.

One thing more I beg leave to observe to your Lordship, and that is this: our government, I understand, imagine that if their laws are confirmed in England, they shall then be an establishment as much as the Church of England. And, accordingly, I am certified, that they have lately sent home their laws, with the colony's seal, to get them confirmed to that purpose. Among the rest are those I sent copies of to your Lordship; if, therefore, those laws, with the rest, should get confirmed, we shall then be more effectually borne down under their pretended establishment. My Lord, I am my poor oppressed people, from whom I can have nothing for my support worth mentioning. I should be very thankful if the honourable Society could augment the salary that belongs to Stratford, which is, and I fear always will be, extremely poor, perhaps the poorest place of any to which their charity is extended.

I am, &c., &c.,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

[*Rev. Mr. Johnson at Stratford to the Secretary.*]

Sept. 16th, 1726.

Reverend Sir,

I have received the honourable Society's letter to me of March 15th, in which I have an account of some books which they have been so kind as to send, and which I have since received. I return the most humble thanks, both of me and of my people, for their kind notice of us, and continual care of our souls; and the joy and gratitude my poor people express on this occasion will, I doubt not, be attended with making such a religious use of these good books as will abundantly answer the pious designs of the honourable Society in bestowing of them; and they do in some measure comfort them, under the hardships and difficulties which are not yet removed, and upon the account of which the Church gains ground but very slowly. At Fairfield, however, the number daily increases, and they have erected a small Church, which I

opened last fall, and we call it Trinity Church. And Mr. Canner takes a great deal of pains to very good purpose, and will, I don't doubt, prove a very worthy man, but he has a very slender support from the people. He designs, about two years hence, to wait on the honourable Society for orders and a mission, unless they see cause to forbid it. In the mean time, as he stands in very great need of it, so he and the people would be very thankful if the honourable Society would be pleased to grant him a small encouragement for the pains he takes in instructing that people and their children in the principles of religion, which he now performs in the quality of a sort of Catechist, omitting every thing that is properly sacerdotal. But not only he, but sundry other very worthy young gentlemen, dreading the thoughts of so tedious a voyage, wait with great impatience in hopes that, possibly, Providence may send us a Bishop, for want of which the Church in these parts is derided and laughed to scorn, while our enemies can take the advantage of immediately fixing teachers wherever they please, in opposition to the Church, and defy us to our faces.

These things make us mourn and go on heavily, and indeed it would make any serious person's heart ache to behold the contempt and dishonour cast on religion, and especially on our Holy Church, on this account, and the grief of our poor people, who know not how to answer the reproaches they are hereby forced to lie under. It is very much lamented by the Rye people, that they are in danger of being denied the good services of Mr. Wetmore, for whom they have a great esteem, and who might have been much more serviceable than a perfect stranger. And I would humbly presume to suggest to the honourable Society that it might be much more for the interest of religion in general, and for the satisfaction of Rye people of New-York or Westchester, if the honourable Society would be so kind to order it, that Mr. Wetmore might yet be appointed for Rye, and Mr. Colgan, either to succeed him at New-York, or to be at Westchester. But this I do with the greatest submission and deference. I have admitted 11 to the Communion and baptised 9 within this half year. But while the Church in the country continues under the

present oppressions, little or nothing can be expected from Newtown or Ripton to encourage the Society to send them a missionary. In the mean time, my burthen is very great, and I would humbly hope the honourable Society will consider me with compassion, who have a more troublesome and less profitable province than any one missionary I know of; for I have nothing to depend on but the bounty of the Society. I am entirely alone in a large colony.

I am, Sir,

Your and their most humble

And most obedient servant,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

[*Rev. Mr. Johnson to the Bishop of London.*]

Stratford in New-England, September 26, 1726.

May it please your Lordship,

I have received your Lordship's kind letter of June 28th, and take this opportunity to return my most humble thanks to your Lordship for the honour you have done me therein, and I am exceedingly glad that I could in any wise contribute to your Lordship's satisfaction upon the subject you wrote to me about. I hope the issue of it will be that we shall at length find better quarter in the country than we have done; though at present things remain just as they were, and we are oppressed and despised as the filth of the world and the off-scouring of all things, unto this day. They all boast themselves an establishment, and look down upon the poor Church of England with contempt, as a despicable, schismatical and popish communion; and their charter is, indeed, the foundation of all their insolence. Happy would it be for the Church of England if it were taken away, and unless they could be made sensible (as the truth is) that they have no warrant from it to despise the Church, or to do any thing to her disadvantage. I am not, my Lord, for any severity towards the Dissenters, and I always treat them with all the tenderness that becomes our common Christianity; but with submission

I cannot but think it very hard, that that Church, of which our most gracious King is the nursing father, should not, in any part of his Majesty's dominions, be at least upon a level with the Dissenters, and free from any oppression from them.

There is another instance I will presume to trouble your Lordship with, and that is this: Your Lordship observes that all persons that shall come to inhabit this colony, or are born here, have, by the charter, all the liberties and immunities of free and natural subjects, as if they were born within the realm of England. Notwithstanding which, they have made laws to prevent strangers from settling among them. As soon as any stranger, though an Englishman, comes into the town, he is, according to their laws, immediately warned to go out, which they always do if he is a Churchman; and it is in the breast of the selectmen of the town whether they will accept of any bondsmen for him. Neither can he purchase any lands without their leave; and unless they see cause to allow him to stay, they can, by their laws, *whip* him out of town, if he otherwise refuses to depart. By this means several professors of our Church, for no other crime but their profession, have been prevented from settling here. A very worthy man, who had not before been of any religion, but was, by God's blessing on my endeavours, induced to become a very serious conformist to our Church, came here to set up a considerable trade; but, for want of men to carry on his business, (occasioned by the forementioned practices,) and by reason of the discouragements he everywhere meets with from them, he is forced to break up and depart, to his unspeakable damage, and the Church has lost a very worthy friend and benefactor. I intended to have given your Lordship some further and more particular account of the state of religion in the country; but I dare not, at this time, trespass further upon your Lordship's patience, but leave that to another opportunity

I am, my Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

[*Rev. Mr. Johnson to the Secretary.*]

Stratford, February 10th, 1727.

Reverend Sir,

I have just come from Fairfield, where I have been to visit a considerable number of my people, in prison for their rates to the dissenting minister, to comfort and encourage them under their sufferings. But, verily, unless we can have relief, and be delivered from this unreasonable treatment, I fear I must give up the cause, and our Church must sink and come to nothing. There are thirty-five heads of families in Fairfield, who, all of them, expect what these have suffered; and though I have endeavoured to gain the compassion and favour of the government, yet I can avail nothing; and both I and my people grow weary of our lives under our poverty and oppression. Some few, however, do now and then come over to us. I have baptised thirty this year, whereof five were adults, and three of them were negroes, and admitted about a dozen to the communion, and reclaimed two from very disorderly lives. A very worthy young gentleman lives with me in my house, who is a scholar, having lately been graduated in a neighbouring College, whom I have reconciled to our Church, and, indeed, (I may say,) to Christianity, for he never was baptised, not even by any of the lecturers which the country swarms everywhere with. Him, therefore, I have baptised and admitted to the communion; and he is a very religious, sober, studious and sensible man, and will, I doubt not, be an ornament to our Church. He designs, with Mr. Caner, in due time, to offer himself to the honourable Society's service, to whom, I hope, they will both appear very acceptable.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your most humble and obedient servant,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

[*Rev. Mr. Johnson to the Secretary.*]

Stratford, April 28th, 1727.

Reverend Sir,

This comes to recommend to the honourable Society's notice and acceptance the young gentleman who is the bearer hereof, Mr. Henry Caner, who was bred up in one of our Colleges, and has, for the time of three years, lived under my eye, and made considerable proficiency in the study of Divinity, and other parts of learning, necessary to qualify him for the ministry, and has all along proved himself a sober, studious and religious young man; and I don't doubt but he will prove a very worthy missionary, if the honourable Society will make use of his services, to the advancement of whose pious concerns he is willing to devote himself. He has already done a great deal of good service at Fairfield for the time he has been among them, in the quality of a catechist and schoolmaster, and will be very acceptable to them as a missionary, as appears by their address inclosed; and will be likewise a great comfort to me, in my solitary neighbourhood, in conspiring with me to forward the interests of religion in this country, and thereby relieving me of a great part of that burthen that lies upon me, who, besides Fairfield, have five places which I am obliged to visit and administer to as often as conveniently I can. I wish, for the encouragement of the young gentlemen who go from hence, that the honourable Society would be pleased to defray the expenses of their voyages thither, according to a declaration made in their account of the Society, printed by their order in 1706, page 74, and that Mr. Caner might have the benefit of it. I should be very thankful if that charitable order of the Society might look back, with a favourable aspect, upon us, who first undertook this difficult and dangerous expedition.

I am their, and, Sir, your most humble

And most obedient servant,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

[*Rev. Mr. Caner to the Secretary.*]

Fairfield, March 15th, 1727-8.

Reverend Sir,

My arrival in New-England was so late in the fall that I had not opportunity to give the honourable Society any account thereof, nor yet to lay before them the state of the Church when I came to Fairfield. I would now, therefore, supply that defect by presenting the honourable Society with the following account.

At my first coming to Fairfield, the professors of the Church expressed their thanks, in a just sense of the noble charity to their souls, which the honourable Society had bestowed in granting their request for a missionary, but were very sorry their abilities could not by any means answer their expectations from them; the heavy taxes levied for the support of dissenting ministers, joined with a small and voluntary offering to the Church, rendering them almost incapable of carrying on the Church, which is not yet finished, nor in any way likely to be so presently. The truth is, the people are heartily ready and willing to do their utmost to be as little burthensome to the honourable Society as possible, but being generally poor, and Fairfield being the chief seat of the Dissenters' opposition, they are able to contribute but very little to the support of that worship which their consciences urge them to maintain.

Besides Fairfield, which I constantly serve, and the villages contiguous which belong to that town, as Poquannuck, Greens Farms and Greenfield, I have several times preached this winter at Norwalk, a town 12 miles distant from Fairfield, and at Stamford, which is about 20 miles, and at Greenwich, about 27 miles distant from Fairfield, and which is the utmost town within the borders of this government westward. Besides these, there is a village northward of Fairfield, about 18 miles, containing near 20 families, where there is no minister at all of any denomination whatsoever; the name of it is Chesnut

Ridge, and where I usually preach or lecture once in three weeks. Newtown, which is about 22 miles northwest of Fairfield, Mr. Johnson and I supply between us, it being equally distant from us. There are still two other towns which I serve as often as my occasions will allow, both still to the northward of Fairfield, viz., Ridgefield and Danbury, the one 17 and the other 23 miles distant from Fairfield. In most of the above mentioned places there are, 7, 10 or 15 families professing the Church of England, from which places, joined with Fairfield, the taxes strained from members of the Church for the support of dissenting teachers amount to £100, which is about £40 sterling, of which Fairfield pays about half. The taking away of these sums very much hinders the building they are carrying on, as well as of contributions to the support of a minister, for which latter use they are not able to raise above £10 sterling per annum.

Notwithstanding this discouragement, the Church grows and increases very much, four families being added since my coming, one whereof was a Jew; whose wife only was before a Christian. This person, besides his excellent skill in Hebrew and Greek and other Eastern languages, is very well studied in the Rabbinical learning, and is a very accomplished person upon all accounts; neither is his conversion balanced with any views of interest or friendship, as I can learn, but upon very good and serious principles he embraced the Christian faith, being baptised with his family very lately. Besides these, since December last, I have baptised one adult and 17 infants, one whereof was an Indian, and have eight new communicants, the whole number of which is now 49.

I have further prospect, likewise, of baptising two other Indians, in a short time, of about 30 years of age, who are very seriously disposed, and attend Divine worship with some constancy.

Thus I have laid before the honourable Society a just account of the state of the Church at Fairfield, and humbly hope, therefore, upon the whole, they will not think the charity they have bestowed lost, but pray continually that they may see the happy effects of these, as well as all their other

pious labours for the good of souls. I am the honourable Society's most dutiful and obedient, as well as, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

HENRY CANER.

[Rev. Mr. Johnson to the Secretary.]

Stratford, New-England, September 20th, 1727.

Reverend Sir,

I have received from the honourable Society two letters, one dated May 23d, the other June 16, for which I take this opportunity to return my humblest thanks, and particularly for their kind notice of my low and difficult circumstances, and the addition they have made to my salary, which I shall ever gratefully consider as a fresh motive and obligation upon me to exert myself, with the greatest zeal and industry I am capable of, in endeavouring to answer their expectations from me, and their pious designs in supporting the mission in this place, where there is a great deal of good to be done, but little to be expected of the poor people. Five pounds sterling per annum is more than I have ever received or can expect, while the government continues as it is.

I likewise thank the honourable Society for the regard they have expressed to my recommendation of Mr. Caner, who has, I conclude, before now, paid his duty to them in person. The afflicted condition of his people, and no prospect of a redress, was the occasion of his waiting on the honourable Society sooner than he would otherwise have done. I hope, however, he will be found in some measure acceptable to them; but I should be very glad that the same salary, which was allowed to him as schoolmaster at Fairfield, might be allowed for a school in this town, where there is a great need of one; and it might be of good service, not only for forming the minds of children to a sense of religion, but likewise for a resort for such young gentlemen successively as from time to time leave the College here, and are rejected

from all business by the Dissenters, on the account of their being reconciled to the Church of England. Under the eye of the missionary here, they might, while they keep school, improve themselves in the study of Divinity till they are qualified for higher business. There is one Mr. Bennett now in town, who very well deserves to be recommended as an instance of what I now speak of, and might do good service in such a school.

I now proceed to answer the queries of the honourable Society which are contained in their last letter; and to the first:

1. Christ Church, in Stratford, was founded in the year 1723, partly at the charge of the members of the Church of England here, who, by subscriptions, raised what money they could for the erecting of it, and partly by the liberal contributions of several pious and generous gentlemen of the neighbouring provinces, and sometimes of travellers who occasionally passed through the town. It is a neat, small wooden building, forty-five feet and a half long, thirty and a half wide, and twenty-two between joints, or up to the roof; but there is no house or glebe belonging to it, nor is it at all endowed, nor has it any settled salary besides the honourable Society's bounty; only the poor people are as liberal in small presents as can be expected of them.

2. To the second: The first beginning of the Church of England in this town was by about ten or fifteen families, most of them tradesmen, some husbandmen, who were born and bred up in England, and came and settled here; some of them were born here, and by means of the rest were reconciled to the Church. It is nigh twenty years since they first endeavoured to have the worship of God in the method of the Church among them, but were disappointed till about five years ago; ever since which, the numbers have been considerably increasing, so that now there are about fifty families within the compass of about fifty miles square of ground, (which is the extent of this town,) who pretty steadily frequent the Church; and besides them, there are a considerable number of people scattered up and down in the neighbouring towns, some five, some ten, twenty and thirty miles off, who

come to Church as often as can be expected; for there is no Church westward within forty miles, only Fairfield, which is eight miles off, where there is a small wooden Church built, and about forty families, who hope for Mr. Caner to be sent them from the Society; and there is no Church eastward within one hundred miles, only at New-London, about seventy miles off, where I sometimes preach to a good number of people, and they are building a wooden Church something larger than ours, and hope for a missionary, and have desired me to recommend their case to the honourable Society, that they may be supplied as soon as may be, and there is there a good prospect of a large increase. There is no Church northward of us at all. We lie upon the sea; [*i. e.*, Sound;] and directly over against us, southward on Long Island, lies Brook Haven, about twenty miles over the water, where I have often preached, both before Mr. Standard was there and since he left there, to a considerable congregation, who are building a handsome Church, and have also desired me to intercede for their speedy supply. They stand in great need of a minister, and much good might be done among them. The towns in this country are pretty thick, scarce any above ten, some not five miles asunder; some of them have sundry little villages belonging to them, and most of them consist of two, three or four hundred families, which, though scarce any of them are contiguous, yet the main body of them live in very near neighbourhoods; the roads are generally well cleared and much used, so that travelling is for the most part indifferent good, and it is a fruitful and thriving country; but the people of our Church are mostly of the poorer sort.

3. As to the third: It must be confessed that our number is very small in comparison with the Dissenters, who are very numerous, perhaps three hundred and fifty families to fifty of us, and they are generally of the Independent or Congregational persuasion, though the principles they support themselves upon are but little different from those of the book falsely called the "Rights of the Christian Church." They have a large meeting-house in the body of the town, within a few rods of the Church, and two small ones besides in the villages. The way of supporting their ministers is by a rate

levied in proportion to their estates, according to law, which the government hath enacted for that purpose, by which they have, as I humbly conceive, without any warrant from their charter, *established* their way of worship and discipline in opposition to any other, and by means of which establishment they oppose the Church.

4. To the fourth: The Dissenters have two poor schools in this town, but the Church hath none, though there is a considerable number of children among us.

5. To the fifth: We have no donations made to our Church, save what have been mentioned, no benefactions to the minister or schoolmaster, no library belonging to the parish, save what the honourable Society have bestowed.

6. To the sixth: The Dissenters in this town have perhaps one hundred and fifty or one hundred and sixty negro slaves among them, who are, some of them, instructed, and a few baptised in their way; but we have but six or seven come to Church, four of which I have baptised.

This is the substance of what account I have to give of the rise, progress and present state of the Church here.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your most humble and most obedient servant,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

[*Rev. Mr. Johnson to the Secretary.*]

Stratford, N. E., October 23d, 1727.

Reverend Sir,

I have very lately written to the honourable Society in obedience to their commands, yet I humbly hope they will forgive me, though I trouble them so soon again with relation to the necessity of a school in this town. In the last I informed the Society of what service it might be to the interest of religion to have a school here, and that Mr. Bennett (who has for above half a year kept school among the Dissenters here, and been rejected by the greatest number of them upon conformity to our Church) would be very serviceable and

acceptable in a school upon the honourable Society's foundation. Since which time I have endeavoured to gain subscriptions, and have been very successful, not only among the Church people, but with a considerable number of Dissenters, who seem at present, many of them, to be in a good temper, especially for Mr. Bennett's sake, not only in contributing to the support of such a school, but in allowing that their children be taught and regulated according to the Society's rules, provided he might be continued, whom they find to be the best schoolmaster they ever had among them; and I believe the greatest part of what subscriptions we shall make will be from among them, for their number and ability are beyond ours. We have already raised nigh thirty pounds per annum, equal to about ten pounds sterling, and hope if we might have the Society's usual salary to schoolmasters, we might make so good a support as would be some encouragement and relief for such young men of the College from time to time as are neglected in the country, by reason of their adherence to our communion. I beg, therefore, if the honourable Society can find themselves able, they would be pleased at so happy a juncture to allow us their charitable assistance in this affair, for nothing could so happily contribute to the enlargement of our Church, by begetting in the tender minds of children a sense of the excellency of our holy religion.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your most humble and obedient servant,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

[*Anonymous Letter to the Bishop of London.*]

Stratford, N. E., October 30th, 1727.

My Lord,

Right Reverend Sir,

May it please your Lordship, these lines wait upon your Grace from a true sense of duty to yourself and of justice to the great work and purpose of promoting religion in these

ends of the Earth, which your Lordship hath so much at heart, and that which moves me to write at this time, is a jealousy that you may be imposed upon by kindnesses received for this place. I think we can never be thankful enough for your Lordship's benignity, under heaven's favour, that one minister is freely maintained among us with so very little charge as ours; and truly our depending in this matter is wholly on the Society's bounty, for, whenever this fails, we shall surely no longer have a minister, because we have no prospect of our ever being able to afford him any thing like a maintenance; for our whole company in this great town consists of about ten or a dozen families, and that of the meaner and poorer sort. I am obliged to say, notwithstanding the relation I bear to them, there is no view of our increasing; there comes now and then a disaffected person to us, and when his passion is over, he returns from whence he came; for the ministry of the town is somewhat of a Presbyterian humour, having shaken off the old Independent notions that were so disgusting, so that the people are under no temptation to change their pastor, and very few have yet done so in this place, except those that were unwilling to pay rates; and we find them as unwilling to be at any public charge now as before. We could not have built our Church had not travellers and strangers bestowed their favours upon us; and truly, our brethren of the Church of England in this colony in the neighbouring towns are none of them persons of any note that were famed for religion; and what more might be said I leave, lest I might discourage your Lordship's further care about us. And now, our Reverend Father, that our brethren may not grow intolerable to you, may these lines be a happy preventive.

The addition of our [prosperity] will not be in asking a salary for our schoolmaster, a project that is now on foot among us; and though our Reverend Pastor may lead or encourage the matter, I cannot but think it is more from oversight than notice, to say that we shall have more interest or benefit in the schools of the town than we now enjoy. I am persuaded this will prove a mistake, for we have the same privileges in either of them as any of the Dissenters have; the

houses are within sight of each other and well supported, which bespeaks the ability of the town, so that if any thing be allowed from home, it will be some ease to the town in general, but of no particular advantage to us, but I much rather think, a prejudice and a wrong to us; for now, there is such a friendship between us and the committee of the schools, as that we have in times past and at present a man of our own persuasion in one of them, and with the general allowance. If by encouragement from your Lordship's benignity to us, we should make a division in this matter, we can expect no such favour for the future. Most of the people of the town are ready to think we have some ill-design in asking a pension for their school, which they are so well able to support of themselves, so that if it be granted we shall hazard their greater dislike to us, and thereby wrong ourselves, rather than reap any advantage by the means, whatever may be pretended by the petitioners. And now, not willing to be further troublesome, I conclude with humbly asking pardon for my boldness in writing, and especially in concealing my name, which I must beg leave to do, lest my brethren become displeased with me. I heartily wish your Lordship length of days, riches and honour; that all your endeavours for the propagating of the Gospel and advancing the interest of our great Lord and Redeemer may be crowned with happy success; and your rewards in glory, when you shall cease from your painful labours, may be very great.

I remain, with submission,

Your Lordship's

Humble servant to command.

NOTE.—It is by no means certain that this letter was not written by a *Congregationalist*, in the assumed character of a Churchman, to defeat Mr. Johnson's application for a school under the patronage of the Church. It may well be doubted whether any one of the congregation of the Stratford missionary either could or would have written the letter.

[*Petition of the Churchwardens and Vestry of Fairfield to the Connecticut Legislature.*]

[This document has been kindly furnished to the Editor from the original among the State Archives at Hartford.—*Ecclesiastical*, Vol. III., Doc. 188.]

To the honourable the Governor, Assistants and Representatives in General Court assembled, this 15th of May, 1727, the request of sundry members of the Church of England in Fairfield, humbly sheweth, that—

Whereas we are, by the Honourable Society in England and the Bishop of London, laid under obligation to pay to the support of the said established Church, and have accordingly constantly paid to it, and been at great charge in building a Church for the worship of God, we pray this Assembly would, by some act or otherwise, as your wisdom shall think fit, excuse us hereafter from paying to any dissenting minister, or to the building of any dissenting meeting-house. And whereas we were, ten of us, lately imprisoned for our taxes, and had considerable sums of money taken from us by distraint, contrary to his Honour the Governor's advice, and notwithstanding solemn promises before given to sit down and be concluded thereby in this affair, we pray that those sums of money taken from us may be restored to us again. If these grievances may be redressed, we shall aim at nothing but to live peaceably and as becometh Christians among our dissenting brethren; and your petitioners, as in duty bound, shall ever pray, &c.

MOSES WARD,	{	<i>Churchwardens.</i>
SAMUEL LYON,		
DOUGAL MCKENZIE,		
JOHN LOCKWOOD,		
NATHAN ADAMS,	{	<i>Vestry.</i>
BEN. STURGIS, &c.,		

In the name and behalf of all the rest of our brethren.

[Upon this petition, the General Assembly enacted, that all persons who were of the Church of England, and those who were of the churches established by the law of the colony, living in the bounds of any allowed parish, should be taxed by the same rule and in the same proportion for the support of the ministry; but where it happened that there was a society of the Church of England, having a clergyman so near any person who had declared himself to be of that Church, that he could and did attend public worship there, then the collector was to deliver the tax collected of such person to the minister of the Church of England to whom he lived near, who was also authorized to receive and recover the same; and if such proportion of taxes was not sufficient in any society of the Church of England to support the incumbent, such society was authorized to levy and collect of those who professed and attended that Church greater taxes at their discretion. The parishioners of the Church of England were also excused from paying any taxes for building meeting-houses for the established Churches of the colony.]*

[*Rev. Mr. Coker to the Bishop of London.*]

Fairfield, March 15th, 1727-8.

My Lord,

I take this opportunity to wait upon your Lordship, (the winter season preventing my doing it sooner,) with my humble duty, as well as to inform your Lordship of the state of the Church, since my arrival in this place, where your Lordship, with the honourable Society, have been pleased to appoint me. My Lord, I find it to my very great satisfaction; the people to whom I am sent are, however, low and poor in fortune, yet are very serious and well-minded, and ready to entertain any instructions that may forward them in the paths of virtue and truth and godliness. I have presumed to lay before the honourable Society an account of the hardships they labour under, in being obliged to pay taxes to dissenting ministers; and shall depend upon your Lordship's usual goodness, to forward that matter, if any thing may be done for our relief from such a burthen; for beside, my Lord, that it hinders the finishing the Church they have begun to build, it is utterly inconsistent with what your Lordship and

* See the Statute on p. 340 of the Law Book of the Colony, edition of 1715.

the honourable Society have been pleased to enjoin me; for although the Dissenters in this government have lately passed an act to exempt all professors of the Church from paying taxes to the support of their ministers, yet they take the liberty to determine themselves who may be called Churchmen, and interpret that act to comprehend none that live a mile from the Church minister; by which means, not only two-thirds of the Church, but of its revenues likewise, we are entirely deprived of the benefit of; and the favour which they would seem to do us proves, in reality, but a shadow. These difficulties, your Lordship will easily be persuaded, very much hinder the growth and weaken the hands of the Church; however, amidst all this, your Lordship will find, by the representation I have made to the honourable Society, there are daily added to the Church such as, by the blessing of God, added to their own honest endeavours, will finally be saved. To this end suffer us, my Lord, to assure ourselves of your Lordship's continued prayers and blessing, which will always be justly valued by one, who is,

With the greatest respect, my Lord,

Your Lordship's humble servant,

HENRY CANER.

[*Rev. Mr. Johnson to the Bishop of London.*]

Stratford, in New-England, April 2d, 1728.

May it please your Lordship,

I am thankful to your Lordship for despatching Mr. Caner so soon to his parish, for I find great advantage to the interests of the Church, from his neighbourhood, and assistance, and I hope the Society will enlarge his salary, as soon as their ability will admit of it. The government here have pretended to make a law in favour of the Church, whereby all that live near our parish Churches are exempted from paying to the dissenting ministers, and it is of some service to such; but those that live scattering in the country are yet persecuted as bad as ever; and in this law they still call themselves the

established Churches, and treat us as Dissenters. I have lately been preaching at New-Haven, where the College is, and had a considerable congregation, and among them several of the scholars, who are very inquisitive about the principles of our Church, and after sermon ten of the members of the Church there subscribed £100 towards the building a Church in that town, and are zealously engaged about undertaking it; and I hope in a few years there will be a large congregation there.

The Church at Boston has lost a very worthy pastor in Mr. Myles, and I doubt they will break into sad confusion there, unless a very worthy and discreet minister be sent them from England, for I am told above five to one are so greatly disgusted with Mr. Harris, that they will never be content under his ministry. Your Lordship has doubtless been informed of the controversy between Mr. Myles and Dr. Cutler on the one hand, and the overseers of Harvard College on the other, and that the General Court have given judgment for the overseers against the clergy of the Church, whereby they have excluded them from being overseers, after they have for many years been allowed that character, and notwithstanding the plain sense of the charter or act of Assembly which comprehends them; so that this matter must now have a trial in England, and I presume to hope that your Lordship's wisdom and goodness will be engaged in behalf of this affair, which, I humbly conceive, is a matter wherein the interest of the Church in this country is much concerned. I have nothing more to add, but that I am,

May it please your Lordship,

Your Lordship's humble servant,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

[*Rev. Mr. Johnson to the Secretary.—Extract.*]

Stratford, April 3d, 1728.

Reverend Sir,

Since my last, I find the advantage of Mr. Caner's neighbourhood and assistance, and the growth of the Church in

these parts is considerable. The government have made a law pretending favour to the Church, by which all that live near our parish Churches are excused from paying rates to their ministers, and it is of some service to such, but those that live scattering in the country are yet persecuted as bad as ever; and in this law they still call themselves the established Church, and treat us as Dissenters.

I have likewise since preached to a considerable number of people at New-London, where they are vigorously carrying on their Church, and I hope they will meet with the honourable Society's encouragement. At Norwalk, where I preached since I wrote last, there are several families who are reconciled to the Church, to whom Mr. Caner since has preached again. And in that town there is a sober and sensible Jew, considerably acquainted with the writings of their Rabbis, with whom I have had much conversation; and he seems seriously inclined to embrace Christianity, and I hope before long to persuade him to be baptised, if the enmity of his countrymen do not prevail against his convictions. I have also (besides other neighbouring parishes) lately preached at New-Haven, a large town about fourteen miles eastward, where there is a College. Great pains were taken to hinder people from coming to Church, and many well wishers to it were over-persuaded not to come; however, I had near a hundred hearers, and among them several of the College; after service about ten of the members of our Church there subscribed £100 towards building a Church in that town, and seem very zealously engaged to prosecute the design, and I hope in a few years there will be a large congregation there. Here, in Stratford, I have another family added to the Church, and I have a sober, ingenuous Indian, one of the natives, a young man whom I have brought over to the belief of Christianity, am teaching him to read and write, and make a business of catechising and instructing him now in the season of Lent, and design to baptise him at Easter, and with him, a little girl about six years old, of the same tribe; both of them are bound to me by indenture from their parents.

[The following petition, upon which nothing was granted, was presented in May, 1728, and is procured from the State Archives at Hartford.—“*Ecclesiastical*,” Vol. III., Doc. 138. *Vide ante*.]

To the Honourable General Assembly, now sitting at Hartford, May the ninth, A. Dom. 1728:

The Memorial of Isaac Brown and the rest of the Churchwardens, Vestrymen and brethren of the Church of England, humbly sheweth:

That sometime in May, 1727, the Churchwardens, Vestrymen and some of the brethren of the Church of England did exhibit a prayer to the honourable Assembly, complaining of some hardship and injury done them by having money forced from them, and some of them imprisoned, on the account or for the support of the dissenting ministry in the County of Fairfield, and for building meeting-houses and settling of ministers; and forasmuch as the prayer of the distressed was by this honourable Assembly heard, and they in their great wisdom, as well as Christian compassion, was pleased to provide a remedy for the relief of the professors of said Church, that they should no more be oppressed by contributing to the support of the Dissenters; and forasmuch as in the act of the honourable Assembly it is not fully understood what part of the professors of the Church of England are exempted, all being within the district of the Reverend Mr. Johnson and Mr. Caner's ministry, within the County of Fairfield, assigned to them by the ministry at home.

We, the subscribers, in behalf of the rest, humbly move to this Assembly, that an explanation of the Assembly's Act in May last, relating to the premises, may be given by them; and also, that for the future the affairs of the Church may be wholly managed by the book of canons relating to gathering taxes for the support of the ministry, that is established by law according to the rubrick of the Church of England; and that for the future, so long as there remain missionaries among us, we may gather all needful taxes by said book of

canons and not by your collectors. Great contentions have already arisen, and many lawsuits, as well as great hardship imposed upon us, who are but small and at great expense in building of Churches, and to help us, the honourable Society in England designs, by their contributing to our missionaries for their subsistence, as sometimes this honourable Assembly have done to small places; but as the act now stands, no donations will be of any advantage to the body of the people, which we humbly conceive is not agreeable to that rule given by our blessed Saviour, Do as you would, &c. We humbly conceive that this honourable Assembly doth not design to oppress us, but make people honest and religious; (not Churchmen for ease, as sometimes they have chapels;) and we humbly hope that 'tis our unfeigned desire that all men were so, and then we should not have these animosities amongst us. We do assure this Assembly, that we are bound in our consciences to adhere to said Church in doctrine and discipline, let our difficulties be ever so great. We humbly ask the Assembly's act for our relief in these things we have prayed for, and in so doing this honourable Assembly will engage us both to duty and respect, and we shall ever pray, as in duty bound.

Dated May 9th, 1728.

ISAAC BROWN,	{	<i>Vestrymen.</i>
BENJA. BURT,		
MOSES WARD,	{	<i>Churchwardens.</i>
SAM'L LION,		
HENRY JAMES,	{	<i>Vestrymen.</i>
MOSES KNAPP,		
NATHAN ADAMS,		
J ^{NO} . LOCKWOOD,		

[*Rev. Mr. Johnson to the Secretary.*]

Stratford, New-England, September 21st, 1728.

Reverend Sir,

Though so considerable a number of my former hearers are gone off to make up Mr. Caner's parish, and notwithstanding that three families are removed this year from this town, out of the government, yet my Church has been considerably fuller this summer than ever it was before. Seven entire families are reconciled to the Church; and though such a number of communicants are gone off to Fairfield parish, yet I have fourscore here and in the neighbouring town, who constantly, and as frequently as may be, attend the communion at Stratford. Beside two of the native Indians I have brought within the pale of the Church, (of whom I made mention in my last,) there is one large family of English, who have heretofore lived like heathens, but are now become serious Christians, and I have baptised them; it consists, beside the two parents, of seven children, of which five are adults. And beside the Jew I mentioned before, who is a sincere good Christian, and has since been baptised, here is another Jew, a very sober sensible young gentleman, whom I have been instrumental in bringing over to the Christian faith, and who is preparing himself, in a short time, to be baptised.

I continue to preach with success at New-Haven, and I hope there will be a Church there in time; though they labour under great opposition and discouragements from the people of the town, who will neither give nor sell them a piece of land for them to build a church on.

The people of Brook-Haven, on Long Island, have earnestly [asked] my intercession with the honourable Society that they may again be supplied with a minister. They are under great necessity of one.

The difficulties and oppressions that the people of our Church have met with under this Independent government have been, and are, so great, that no less than seven families

have removed hence into New-York government since I came hither, of which three removed this year. At present, indeed, we have a little better quarters with them, by reason of the terror they are under from Mr. Winthrop's complaints against the government; and I wish they may be taught a better temper towards the Church.

This is all at present from, Reverend Sir,

Yours, &c.,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

[*Rev. Mr. Caner to the Secretary.—Extract.*]

Fairfield, October 10th, 1728.

Sir,

It seems proper to observe to the honourable Society that the Province of Connecticut is divided into four counties, whose denominations arise from their first towns, Fairfield, New-London, Hartford and New-Haven. That of Fairfield being the westernmost in the province, borders on New-York, and contains the towns of Fairfield, Stratford, Norwalk, Stamford, Greenwich, Ripton, New Town, Danbury, Ridgefield and Woodbury, beside their several villages, as four about Fairfield; Green Farms, Greenfield, Poquanuck and Chesnut Ridge, three of them about four miles distant, the last about sixteen; one belonging to Stratford, called Unity, one to Norwalk, one to Greenwich; each of these villages contain 50 or 60 families; the towns, one with another, have twice that number; the sum of whose inhabitants, though difficult to come at, by reason of some of them not having kept any register of births, and very few of baptisms, I have, at length, pretty justly attained, and find them as set down in my *Notitia Parochialis*, herein inclosed; where, likewise, the honourable Society will find I have collected out of these the number of the baptised, as also the number of infants and adults baptised by me this half year. In my account of the number of inhabitants, I have left out Stratford, with its village; also New Town and Ripton,

which places are under the care of the Rev. Mr. Johnson; all the other towns and villages in the county I serve to the best of my power, preaching to those on week days whom I cannot attend on Sunday, there being several families as well communicants as professors of the Church of England, in every one of these towns and villages.

As to the Indians in this county, their number is now become very small, by reason of distempers brought among them, by the English, together with the excessive drinking which destroys them apace; and of those few that remain, to the eternal shame of the English in these parts, it must be said, that, although I constantly labour with them, as I find them in my way, yet very seldom conceive hopes of doing them any good, who have taken up an inveterate prejudice against Christianity, grounded on the shamefully wicked lives of us, its professors.

The difficulties which chiefly affect both me and my people are what have been often complained of, the heavy taxes by the government imposed on those who profess the Church of England, for the support of dissenting teachers, which very much hinders the finishing our Church, and providing decent ornaments for its service, as well as discourages others from joining with us in so good a work, when they observe how we are slighted and despised, and imposed upon, accounted as the filth and dross of the earth, and the off-scouring of all things.

To the rectifying of which, in some measure, for the future, I would, in most humble manner, lay before the honourable Society the following scheme.

The government has lately passed an act, that all professors of the Church of England, living so near any place where there is an Episcopal minister settled, as that they can conveniently, and do constantly attend upon his preaching, they shall be excused from fees to the Dissenters, and shall pay them to the Church minister; by which means all the professors aforesaid, who live within a mile or two of our Church, are excused, while others are obliged to pay, and some are deprived of two-thirds of its revenues. Now, I humbly conceive that if the honourable Society, instead of appointing

me their missionary at Fairfield, would, by a like instrument, under their common seal, appoint me their missionary, to serve from Fairfield to Byram River, or the borders of the government westward, then by an order of the honourable Society, in their Instructions to Missionaries, (page 25, parag. XL.) I should be under obligation to reside sometimes at one of these places and sometimes at another, as the necessities of either should require; by this means shall the objection of our people, living too remote, be taken off, seeing they will all be equally near to me, and therefore shall the Church gain all her revenues, and be able to go forward with business.

[*Minute of the Society relating to Mr. Caner's being appointed Missionary to two or three places, and Mr. Ketelby's opinion thereon.*]

Read the 18th of July, 1729.

The Rev. Mr. Caner, missionary from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, to Fairfield, in Connecticut government, in New-England, in his letter dated 10th Oct., 1728, writes as follows:

"The government has lately passed an act, that all professors of the Church of England, living so near any place where there is an Episcopal minister settled, as that they can conveniently, and do constantly, attend upon his preaching, they shall be excused from taxes to the Dissenters, and shall pay them to the Church minister. By which means, all the professors aforesaid, that live within a mile or two of our Church, are excused, while others are obliged to pay, and some are deprived of two-thirds of its revenues. Now, I humbly conceive that if the Society, instead of appointing me missionary at Fairfield, would, by a like instrument, under their common seal, appoint me their missionary to serve from Fairfield to Byram River, or the borders of this government westward, then, as I should be under an obligation to reside sometimes at one of these places and sometimes at another, as the necessities of either should require, the

objection of people living too remote would be taken off, seeing that they will all be equally near to me, and thereby shall the Church gain her revenues, and be able to go forward with business."

At a meeting of the Society, 16th May, 1729, agreed, that this matter be laid before Mr. Ketelby, and his opinion desired whether the Society's appointment of their missionaries to two or three places will exempt the Church there from paying the Independent teachers. Though at first reading this case, I was clear in my own opinion, yet, it appearing to be a matter in which the interest of the Church ministers and the honour of the Society were, in some measure, concerned, I have conferred with other gentlemen, of undoubted probity and judgment, and we all agree that the Society ought not to grant what is proposed by Mr. Caner; that their appointment of their missionary to two or three places will not exempt the Church people from paying to the Independent teachers; that it is neither within the intention nor the letter of the Act, which, as it requires a constant attendance upon the minister's preaching, so it must necessarily suppose his constant residence in one place; this may be construed as an attempt to evade the Act, only with a view to the secular advantages of particular persons, and may, perhaps, involve the Church ministers there in greater trouble, and more to their detriment, than any benefit they hope for from the compliance of the Society in this particular.

ABEL KETELBY.

[*Rev. Mr. Johnson to the Secretary.*]

Stratford, May 26th, 1729.

Reverend Sir,

We yet labour under so much uneasiness in our government, that several people have moved out of it into New-York government, of which no less than four families since my last; and I think I have gained but three new families to be steady

upon the services of the Church, though there are many, and those daily increasing, who are really, in their minds, reconciled to the Church, but are kept back from declaring themselves for fear of the displeasure of the government; and yet I think a more charitable and friendly temper towards the Church is, from time to time, visibly increasing among the people in these parts. I have baptised the Jew, Mr. Mordecai Marks, concerning whom I wrote in my last, who is a very worthy proselyte and steady communicant, as also two native Indians, both adults, two adult negroes and two negro children, all this last half year, so that the state of my parish at present is this :

	<i>Families.</i>
1st. Number of inhabitants in this town,.....	260
“ “ “ of the Church,.....	53
2d. Number of baptised,.....	223
Of which this half year,.....	23
3d. Number of adults baptised this half year,.....	6
4th. Number of actual communicants in Stratford and places adjacent, excepting Fairfield parish,....	86
Of which admitted this half year,.....	6
5th. Number of professors of the Church, about.....	200

I am, Rev. Sir,
Your most obedient and humble servant,
SAMUEL JOHNSON.

[*Rev. Mr. Johnson to the Secretary.*]

Stratford, November 20th, 1729.

Reverend Sir,

I am very thankful to the honourable Society for admitting Mr. Dwight into their service, though I could have been glad had he been fixed somewhere else in New-England, particularly since Brook-Haven was supplied before, (and I hope to their content.) We are all sorry that he had not been placed at Providence, where it is to be feared not only the interest of the Church, but even all sense of religion, (what little there was of it,) will in a manner be lost, by means of the bad character and vile behaviour of the person who is missionary in that place, and upon whose account the Church is sadly dishonoured and we are all filled with shame and confusion of face.

I find in the abstract of the proceedings of the Society last year, mention made of a salary for a school at Stratford, but have never received any letter, or otherwise any intimation from the honourable Society about it; which makes me fear there was some mistake about the matter. However, though I should be very thankful if there was a salary appointed for that purpose, and there is great need of it, yet since we want ministers more, of the two, than schoolmasters, I would not desire that the providing for a school should stand in the way of providing for missionaries, and particularly, not only Mr. Caner stands in need of an augmentation of his salary, but there is New-London, in this colony, and Westerly, in the Narragansetts, (in both which places they have built and are finishing very handsome small Churches,) that are in great necessity of ministers, and I have this summer visited them, and find a good prospect of great increase to the Church.

Besides which places, I have not long since visited the people on Connecticut River, and find a considerable number who are subscribing towards a Church at a town called Wethersfield, where there is likely to be a flourishing

colony, and will need the honourable Society's assistance. I likewise still continue frequently to preach at New-Haven, Ripton and Newtown with success; though, at the last of these places, it must be confessed that the Dissenters have of late got the advantage of us, partly by the craft and assiduity of their teachers, and partly by means of the removing of a considerable man of our Church, (whose influence used to be great in that town,) from thence into New-York government.

The Church here at Stratford has of late been unhappy by means of a foolish contention, that has sprung up among my people, to the great hindrance of the growth of the Church, and has given me a great deal of trouble. However, I have had some success, having baptised one adult and twelve infants, one of which was native, and admitted six to the Holy Communion since last April, otherwise my *notitia parochialis* stands much as it did in my last.

Sir, yours, &c., &c.,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

[*The Churchwardens, &c., of Wallingford to the Bishop of London.*]

May it please your Lordship,

We, the Churchwardens and parishioners of Wallingford and the adjacent parts in the Colony of Connecticut, in New-England, beg leave to offer our humble duty to your Lordship.

We are a Church but newly planted, and however content we are at present to have the service of the Church only once a quarter by a minister, on every Lord's day besides we perform the service as far as is proper for laymen; but in that part we are something deficient for want of sermon books, &c., which we cannot easily procure in this country. We are sensible the Reverend Theodore Morris cannot leave his other parishes oftener, yet we hope God, in his providence, will so order it, that we may at last be oftener attended; there are many ready to join in our communion, and have

nothing to object to it, but our having service so seldom by a minister. We greatly rejoice that we are assisted in learning to know which is the true Church of Christ, and the manner how we ought worship. But with melancholy hearts we crave your Lordship's patience, while we recite that divers of us have been imprisoned, and our goods from year to year dis-trained from us for taxes, levied for the building and sup-porting meeting-houses; and divers actions are now de-pending in our courts of law in the like cases. And when we have petitioned our governor for redress, notifying to him the repugnance of such actions to the laws England, he hath proved a strong opponent to us; but when the other party hath applied to him for advice how to proceed against us, he hath lately given his sentence "to enlarge the goal and fill it with them," (that is, the Church.) But we supplicate both God and man that our persecutors may not always prevail against us.

And now, that God may bless your Lordship, and the charitable endeavours of the honourable Society, and enable them to send more labourers to a harvest truly plentiful, is the sincere prayer of

Your Lordship's

Most dutiful and obedient servants,

THOMAS IVES, } *Churchwardens.*
NORTH INGHAM, }

EBENEZER WAINWRIGHT,

SHADRACK SEAGAR,

JOHN BELLAMY,

THOMAS DEWLITTLE,

WAITSTILL ABINATHER,

AARON TUTTLE,

PHINEAS IVES,

MATTHEW BELLAMY,

EBENEZER BLAKESLEE,

ENOS SMITH,

JOHN MEKY,

THOMAS WILLIAMS,

GEORGE FISHER.

[*Inhabitants of New-London to the Secretary.*]

April 18th, 1730.

Reverend Sir,

We, the underwritten inhabitants of New-London, Groton, and other places adjacent, having once and again petitioned the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts for a missionary, beg leave, by you, to renew that, our most earnest request.

We have, at a very great expense, erected us a Church, which (unless when Mr. McSparran visits us) continues shut up, to the derision of its enemies, but to our great grief and discomfort, with this only abatement, that it stands a monument and witness for us, how earnestly we desire the blessing we now pray for.

Mr. Samuel Seabury, a gentleman born and bred in this country, goes home recommended to the notice of the Bishop of London and the Society, by the clergy here; therefore, he may be sure of a welcome reception in what vacancy soever he is sent to fill in New-England, where he is known, so we beg (with all the importunity, the utmost necessity, and most earnest desire of a Gospel minister among us is able to inspire) our destitute condition may come in remembrance at the Board, when that gentleman applies for a mission.

We are, Reverend Sir, &c.

[*Ben. Mr. Johnson to the Secretary.*]

Stratford, New-England, May 5th, 1730.

Reverend Sir,

This comes to the honourable Board by Mr. Samuel Seabury, who has been educated and graduated in the colleges in this country, and has led a sober, virtuous and studious life, and now heartily embraces the principles of the Church of Eng-

land, and is sincerely well affected to the present government, and desirous to devote himself to the service of the honourable Society; and, I doubt not, but if they shall see cause to employ him, they will find him faithful in the discharge of his duty wherever they shall please to send him. There are several places here, in New-England, that much need to be supplied, particularly Providence, Westerly and New-London, in either of which he is well known, and will be very acceptable.

I have visited several places in the government, since my last, and find a growing disposition toward the Church, particularly at Greenwich, where the Rev'd Mr. Canes hath laboured with good success; and there seems to be a good prospect that the whole parish, which never have had any minister of any denomination settled among them there, will come into the Church.

Nothing remarkable has happened in my parish since my last; one family has been added to our number, and one, likewise, has removed from us into New-York government. I have reason to fear that my last letter, of November 15th, miscarried, and therefore I have set down my *Notitia Parochialis*.

1st. No. of inhabitants in this town,..... 270
Families of which belong to the Church,..... 53

Beside those that belong to the neighbouring villages.

2d. No. of the baptised since the mission here,..... 250
Of which, this year, were baptised,..... 20

Of which one only was adult.

3d. No. of communicants here in the neighbourhood, 89
Of which were admitted this year,..... 9

4th. No. of professors of the Church, about..... 200
Beside many in the neighbouring towns.

5th. No. of heathens uncertain, because of their frequent changing their habitations.

I am, Reverend Sir, &c.,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

[*Rev. Mr. McSparran to the Secretary.*]

Narragansett, May 20, 1730.

Rev. Sir,

Mr. Samuel Seabury, at whose hands you will receive this, was educated at the seminaries of learning here, and did, for some time, preach to the Dissenters, by whom he is well reported of for a virtuous conversation. He has, for some time past, conformed to our Church, and, manifesting a desire of going upon the Society's mission, I thought it became me to encourage a person of his merit by recommending him to the Society's notice. The place of his birth and most intimate acquaintance is Groton, in the neighbourhood of New-London, which I thought proper to observe, in hopes that it might prove an inducement to determine his mission to that place, where a minister is exceedingly wanted. Your letter of the 19th November last came too late to my hands to be communicated to the gentlemen of New-London in time to have their answers transmitted by this conveyance. I am but a few days returned from that place, where I preached, and saw them renew an address for a minister; but shall do my endeavours, when I go again, (if not before,) to bring them together, in order more fully to answer the Society's expectations. In the mean time I beg leave to observe, that beside the forty odd pounds they have subscribed, there will arise upon these subscribers a ministerial rate, due to the established Presbyterian minister, of at least twenty pounds per annum, but which, by a particular act of the Colony of Connecticut, is transferred upon the Episcopal minister, where one resides, which quota of sixty pounds is triple the sum their neighbours pay, and is in a much greater disproportion to what is paid by the members of the Church of England in this government, (numbers and abilities considered.)

I thank God my Church thrives, and those that attend the established worship are, with a few exceptions, persons of good conversation. But I cannot give a better instance of the suc-

cess God has given me, than to take notice to the Society that, since my incumbency, I have baptised one hundred and seventy-six persons, whereof sixty are adults, and that the communicants are still increasing.

I am, Reverend Sir, &c.,

JAMES McSPARRAN.

[*Rev. Mr. Coner to the Secretary.*]

Fairfield, New-England, Sept. 18th, 1730.

Sir,

In my last letter, dated on Easter Monday, I laid before the honourable Society my own as well as my people's hearty thanks for their care and bounty relating to the increase of my salary. The churchwardens and vestry, I there informed the honourable Society, desired some time to try the purses as well as the readiness of the people to advance the sum expected of them. Their accounts they have now brought in, and do find the utmost willingness in the people to comply with any proposals consistent with their abilities, which the churchwardens find to be very slender, and not answerable to the honourable Society's expectation from them.

The truth is, there doth appear in the people a great forwardness to hearken to instruction, and they seem really willing to contribute the utmost they are able to the support of those means whereby they receive it. But the number of those who have actually reconciled themselves to our constitution is yet but small; there are greater numbers come to us as Nicodemus to our blessed Saviour, and whom, therefore, the others are not willing to discourage, by representing the great difficulties that will ensue upon their joining with us, but are rather willing to bear a greater burden themselves than fright them back by severe proposals.

The utmost they do declare themselves able to raise, is fifteen pounds sterling per annum; though, to balance this, they have set on foot a design which I am confident in some years

will enable them to maintain a missionary themselves. It is this, that every professor do, in his will, make over a certain sum (what he sees fit) to the support of this particular Church, to be paid at his decease, which sum being secured, the churchwardens have power to use the interest of it to any purposes the Church shall think fit to order. There have deceased two members of our Church since this design hath been laid, each of which hath left one hundred pounds to the advancement of it, and two others, supposed at the point of death, have ordered, the one an hundred, and the other fifty pounds, in their wills, though both of them are since recovered.

Now, I presume it is easy to see that this thing, having due encouragement, will, in the compass of some years, enable them to maintain their own ministers, and do therefore declare that they will, from time to time, as they prove able, give notice of it to the honourable Society, that the salary which may be now afforded, may gradually be transferred to others who may then be in their present circumstances; that is, unable to help themselves.

The particular state of my parish the honourable Society will best be informed of from my *Notitia Parochialis*, herein enclosed, from which the honourable Society will, I hope, see encouragement sufficient to induce them to continue, if not add, further favours to my people. I believe, in our present circumstances, they could not be more acceptable to them and the honourable Society's most dutiful and obedient servant, as well as, Sir, &c.,

HENRY CANER.

NOTTIA PAROCHIALIS.

1. Number of inhabitants, upwards of 8,000. 2. Number of baptised, about 7,140. 3. Number baptised by me this half year, 20; adults 10—blacks 2, Indian 1, whites 7; infants 20—whites 18, Indians 2. 4. Number of actual communicants of the Church of England, 65. 5. Number of those who profess themselves of the Church of England, about 500 in all the parishes. 6. Number of heathens and infidels, about 40. 7. Number of converts from a profane life, 4.

[Rev. Mr. Johnson to the Secretary.]

Stratford, in Connecticut, October 25th, 1730.

Reverend Sir,

I have but little to write in respect to my charge since my last, though I think my Church is more frequented by Dis-senters, who, many of them, come once in a while to Church, yet I cannot say there have been any thoroughly reclaimed within this half year; however, a good temper toward the Church still very sensibly increases, and upon Connecticut River they are contriving to build a Church. One thing I have particularly to rejoice in, and that is, that I have a very considerable influence in the College in my neighbourhood; and that a love to the Church gains ground greatly in it. Several young men that are graduates, and some young ministers, I have prevailed with to read and consider the matter so far, that they are very uneasy out of the communion of the Church, and some seem much disposed to come into her service; and those that are best affected to the Church are the brightest and most studious of any that are educated in the country.

Many poor people complain of the want of Prayer-Books and Expositions of the Church Catechism; I should, therefore, be very thankful if the honourable Society would be pleased to order a few of them to be sent to me, and if, with them, I had a few Ostervald's Catechisms and Whole Duties of Man, I could make them very useful. I desire that if any Prayer-Books are sent, that they may have Tate and Brady's Psalms bound up with them; they only are used among us.

I am, Reverend Sir, &c.,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

[*See Mr. Johnson to the Secretary. — Extract.*]

Stratford, 2d June, 1731.

Reverend Sir,

Since my last there has happened an unfortunate alteration in my parish, by the loss of a worthy parishioner, Mr. Loring, who was the most considerable person of any influence we had among us; the most able and the most forward in promoting the interests of the Church, and always at the head of every good design; for want of whom, I doubt the Church here will greatly suffer and languish, for his example and influence had the greatest hand in its advancement, the rest being generally poor tradesmen, and, consequently, apt to be despised and despised.

However, I have had one or two new converts, and especially one, from a loose irregular way of living, to a life of virtue and industry; and our Church is not less, if any thing, more frequented, and, in the villages, it remains much as it was.

New-London I think well provided for in Mr. Seabury, and I hope the Church will flourish in that town. I have laboured much to promote the Church at Westerly Narragansett, as I have occasionally passed that way; but for the want of a resident minister, I doubt, through the multitude of sectaries that abound in those parts, and a prevailing spirit of irreligion and profaneness, the Church's interest will decay among them, where the means of religion, of any sort, are so much wanted, that they are truly the objects of the greatest compassion.

I have visited Brook-Haven, on Long Island, since the departure of Mr. Campbell, and find them almost sinking under the wounds they have received by the frequent changes of ministers, and the non-good conduct of some that have been among them. However, I preached to a considerable congregation, and afterwards called their vestry together, who desired me to express their humblest gratitude to the

honourable Society, that they have been allowed an interest in their charity, and earnestly desire that it may be continued, and that they may be still reckoned among the Society's dependents. But, for fear of being disappointed, as they were before of Mr. Dwight, they humbly desire the Society not to send them another missionary till they shall find some young gentleman to send from these parts, whom they have known before and he them, that they may have a future prospect of mutual liking, and so not be under any temptation of parting again suddenly, as the case has been.

They desire me to look out a young man to reside awhile among them. I mentioned a virtuous and discreet young man and of good abilities, whose name is Brown, (brother to that excellent person who went home for orders with Dr. Cutler and myself, and died of the small-pox,) who has ever since been steadily following his learning under my direction, and has already taken one degree in the College, and is within about a year and a half of age for orders. They were desirous I would send him to them upon probation, to read prayers and sermons and catechise their youth, and he is accordingly gone among them, and, I believe, will be very acceptable to them; they promised to subscribe toward his support, and purpose, if he and they shall be on both sides suited, to recommend him to the honourable Society, and beg he may be their missionary.

In the mean time, they would be very humbly thankful to the honourable Society, if he may be allowed £10 or £15 toward his better support, or, at least, some assistance to defray his expenses when he shall go home for orders, for he has laid out almost all his estate upon his education.

I am, Reverend Sir, &c.,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

My Lord, I humbly submit to your Lordship's correction, if in this or any other instance my conduct has been faulty, and earnestly beg your direction and benediction, who am, with the greatest veneration,

[*Rev. Mr. Johnson to the Bishop of London.*]

Stratford, in New-England, June 14th, 1731.

May it please your Lordship,

My Lord, there are two things which have occasioned some dispute among the clergy and people in these parts, about which I humbly presume to beg your Lordship's directions. One is relating to the exhortation after baptism to the god-fathers to bring the child to the Bishop to be confirmed. Some wholly omit this exhortation, because it is impracticable; others insert the words, (if there be opportunity,) because our adversaries object to it as a mere jest, to order the god-fathers to bring the child to the Bishop, when there is none within a thousand leagues of us, which is a reproach that we cannot answer.

The other dispute is about employing young scholars, that are candidates for the ministry, in villages and destitute places, in reading sermons and prayers, (omitting everything that is proper to the priest's office.) This, I own, is what I and some others have earnestly recommended as excusable, by reason of the necessities of the country, and have, in several instances, found it highly useful in keeping up a sense of religion, and propagating it, when resident ministers cannot be had; and though I have always let the honourable Society know of my proceedings herein, they have never intimated the least disapprobation of this method, but, on the other hand, have practically approved of it, in receiving once and again those who have been so employed. Notwithstanding this, there are some of our brethren who, with great zeal and importunity, cry out against this practice as a betraying of the Church, and giving up the necessity of ordination, &c., to the great mortification of those poor destitute people who have no other way of keeping up the worship of God among them.

My Lord, I humbly submit to your Lordship's correction, if in this or any other instance my conduct has been faulty, and earnestly beg your direction and benediction, who am, with the greatest veneration,

May it please your Lordship, your Lordship's

Humble servant,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

[*Pétition of several members of the Church of England, in Reading and Newtown, in Connecticut.*]

New-England, March 20th, 1732.

May it please the honourable Society,

We, the subscribers, members of the Church of England, in Reading and Newtown, within the County of Fairfield and Colony of Connecticut, in New-England, being under very great difficulty to come at the worship of God according to that excellent establishment, by reason of our distance from the honourable Society's missionaries, the Rev. Mr. Johnson and Mr. Caner, which is about twenty miles, and being indeed, some of us, at a great distance from any publick worship at all, whereby not only we ourselves, but our poor children, also extremely suffer, and are like to be trained up in very great ignorance of the knowledge of the Gospel, do beg leave to lay this our calamitous state before your venerable board, and become very humble petitioners for a share in that charity which is conspicuous even in this dark corner of the earth.

To this we are the rather encouraged by a favourable letter to some of our number from the honourable Society, obtained about two years after the Rev. Mr. Johnson's first coming among us, wherein the honourable Society were pleased to offer us a missionary upon certain conditions, which, at that time, we were not able to come upon, by reason of the settlement of the bearer hereof, Mr. John Beach, a gentleman, at that time, of a different persuasion; but now, more and fur-

ther encouraged by the said gentleman's being reconciled to the established Church of England, especially in that being now bound home to receive holy orders from the Lord Bishop of London, he is willing to return to this place of his former settlement and abode, if his Lordship and the honourable Society shall think proper.

The good opinion that persons of all persuasions have of him here, where he has been known for several years past, and accounted a gentleman of a remarkable sober and regular conduct, and of learning and good ability to discharge the ministerial office, gives us reason to promise ourselves a great deal of happiness and comfort from his future ministration, if the honourable Society shall think fit to return him to us.

Though we are poor, the unavoidable consequence of settling an uncultivated country, and so cannot possibly, without assistance, provide a suitable support for the abovesaid gentleman, yet what we are able we are very ready to engage, and have affixed to our respective names underwritten; and we do humbly hope and pray that the honourable Society, out of their great charity, will supply wherein we are wanting towards the said gentleman's support; as we flatter ourselves with hopes of success in this affair from the former goodness and great charity of your venerable board, so we would humbly hope that the consideration of several towns lying about us, at a distance of about seven miles, as Danbury, Ridgefield, Woodbury and New-Milford, and numbers of Indians, would be of some further inducement toward some suitable relief to our truly deplorable state; for, indeed, we are not so selfish as to expect Mr. Beach's service should be wholly confined to ourselves, but that he may be capable of propagating Christian knowledge in those other towns likewise.

Thus, the Reverend Mr. Johnson and Mr. Caner, though settled at Stratford and Fairfield, have been and are still very ready to assist us, so far as is consistent with the distance between them and ourselves, for whose service, as flowing from the Society's charity, we are truly thankful, wishing withal there may never be wanting pious men in these parts to promote the Church's interest.

Fearing we have been already too tedious, we only add our hearty and fervent prayers to Almighty God for success in your truly charitable designs to the souls of men.

We are, &c., &c.,

LEWEL MOREHOUSE and others.

[*Rev. Mr. Johnson to the Bishop of London.*]

*Stratford, in New-England,
April 5th, 1732.*

My Lord,

I humbly thank your Lordship for your kind letter of September 30th, and am, as to myself, perfectly well satisfied with the answers you give to the difficulties I presumed to lay before you. Only, I imagined there might be some difference between the case of those who are immediately under an establishment, as it is in England, and those who are situated, as we are here, where the attorney and solicitor-general have declared there is no establishment of religion at all, and, therefore, not even of the Church of England, and, consequently, the obligations to an exact conformity seem not altogether the same as there. I write not this, my Lord, on my own account, as though I desired the least abatement of any thing established in England; I heartily wish to God every thing established there was admitted and established here, nor did I ever vary from the establishment in the least instance, unless where there was an evident necessity for it; but my solicitous concern for the weal of my dear country makes me willing, if it could consist with my duty to the best of Churches, and be indulged by the authority to whom I owe subjection, to abate, in some circumstantial matters, of what is wisely established at home, that I might have less occasion to spend my time and pains and pleading; and with so little success, because of things confessedly in their own nature indifferent and circumstantial, which I would much rather, and could, with greater success, devote to the advancing of the great essentials and vitals of religion, for which it

seems as if there would be the more occasion, inasmuch as (besides many other gross errors) the pernicious books and notions, which your Lordship found it so necessary to guard your Diocese against, are coming in upon the plantations like a flood, and will I [fear] take the more effect, by how much the less there is of the face of an establishment among us, or of Bishops to preside over us. And, indeed, I doubt, unless the Church be beforehand with them, these things, together with their wretched broken condition in the way they are at present in, will, ere long, induce those of the Congregational and Presbyterian persuasion to endeavour (and they may possibly succeed) to get themselves formed into an establishment, after the manner as it is in Scotland. These considerations, my Lord, induced me, upon a conversation with, and even at the desire of several ingenious men among the Dissenters in these parts, to draw up the enclosed proposals, which I humbly submit, with an entire resignation to your Lordship's wisdom, and which I hope, of your wonted goodness, you will pardon, and impute the vanity of my presumption to an earnest desire, if I could, to be doing something wherein I might be some way serviceable to my poor, confused and divided country. My Lord, as the Church here has been very unfortunate in the defeat of the noble design of the Reverend the Dean of Londonderry, which, especially, if it had been executed on the Continent, would have been of vast advantage to the interest of religion and learning in America, so it has, on the other hand, been happy since in the conversion, (besides a number of other good people,) of the worthy persons who have all had a publick education in the neighbouring College, and two of them have been dissenting teachers; two of them will go into other business, and one of them is Mr. Beach, the bearer hereof, whom I know, by long experience of him, (he having been heretofore my pupil, and ever since my neighbour,) to be a very ingenious and studious person, and a truly serious and conscientious Christian; but I forbear to say any thing further of his case, and refer your Lordship to our joint recommendation of him,

And remain, &c., &c.,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

Proposals relating to some method for the more successful reformation and propagation of religion in America, humbly submitted to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of London.

(1.) INASMUCH as the Attorney and Solicitor-General have declared that there is no establishment of religion in these countries, it is humbly suggested whether some practicable method might not be devised and carried into execution for the establishment of religion in these English Dominions. (2.) For seeing there are many parts of the English plantations that are in a manner destitute of any publick instruction at all, and where they are (generally, but very poorly) provided with teachers in the Independent or Congregational way, they are, according to the natural tendency of those opinions, miserably broken to pieces with divisions and contentions among themselves, insomuch, that they seem hastening on apace toward an utter dissolution, and some very corrupt doctrines are propagated without control, so that most people of sense and consideration among them are even sick and weary of their present situation, and long to come into some more effectual method for promoting the ends of government, religion, peace and order; it is therefore thought very likely that some establishment, even under an Episcopal form of government, would, in a little time, be generally submitted to. And yet, (3.) it will perhaps be impossible to procure a general reconciliation, especially among the populace, to all the ceremonies and constitutions of our Church, and much time and pains spent in pleading about them might be employed, and with better success, in promoting the great essentials and vitals of religion; it is, therefore, humbly submitted, whether it would be necessary or expedient to insist or be much intent upon the external and confessedly circumstantial matters, if any establishment were to be promoted; for, (4.) as the truly excellent rules which our most venerable reformers proposed to themselves, carried them into such a method of publick worship and discipline as is happily established in England, as being in the best

manner suited to the times and circumstances, that there had been, were and are, so it is with the humblest deference suggested, whether considering the vastly different circumstances of these places and times, the same rules would not lead to methods in several things differing as to circumstantial matters, if the reformation and propagation of religion were to be carried into an establishment in these countries? And, therefore, (5.) might there not be projected some such a comprehension suited to these countries, as was endeavoured by many in England in King William's time; according to which, many things as they now stand might be enjoined, viz., such as are of the greatest importance in themselves, and will be the most easily admitted, and some things a little altered to suit the present circumstances, and other things, which are of less importance and most objected against, only recommended? And (6.) lastly, is it impossible for the English Dominions in America to be provided for with one or two Bishops, and those subject to the Lord Bishop of London as Archbishop of the Plantations abroad; and is there no way to provide revenues, (though they were but small,) compared with those in England? Would not £400 or £500 sterling per annum a-piece, or, rather than fail, £300, enable them, in some good measure, to answer the ends of their sacred functions; and is it impossible that such a provision might be made without breaking in upon the interest of the governors and governments as they now stand? Though, indeed, it would be much happier for the Church, especially unless we had a Bishop, if the charters were taken away; and most people begin to think, since they have got into such a wretched, mobbish way of management, that it would be best for the people themselves.

If some such things as these could be accomplished, as the present situation of things here renders it now a very suitable juncture for something to be done, so it would be a truly great charity to the souls of men, and it is hard indeed if we must forever despair of such happiness.

[*Rev. Mr. Caner to the Secretary.—Introduct.*]

Fairfield, New-England, Sept. 18th, 1733.

Sir,

I hope it will be some satisfaction to the honourable Society to be informed that the spirit and temper of the people, formerly so hot against us, very much abates, and that they begin to treat us in a much more friendly manner than they were wont; this good disposition, I hope, by God's assistance, to cultivate and improve to beneficial effects. I have the half year past baptised ten infants and one adult, and received seven new communicants, the whole number of which is now seventy-eight. The state of my Church in general is indeed much more promising than in time past; some difficulties, it is true, we still labour under, but which time and industry will in great measure remove.

I beg leave to subscribe myself, &c.,

H. CANER.

[*Rev. Mr. Johnson to the Bishop of London.*]

Stratford, in New-England,

December 10th, 1733.

My Lord,

Your Lordship remembers that, in the year 1725, upon a representation made by the ministers of the Church in Boston, of a design then on foot in that government of a council of their ministers, to meet by appointment of the General Assembly there, the Lords Justices were pleased, in a letter to the Lieutenant-Governor of that colony, to express their disapprobation of any such proceedings, as implying an invasion of his Majesty's prerogative, and ordered him to forbid

any such council of ministers to meet, and declare that it is not lawful for the clergy to meet as in a Synod, without authority from his Majesty. Now, my Lord, how far the case of this government differs from that, your Lordship will judge; but I presumed you would not take it ill of me if I should lay before your Lordship any case of that nature that should occur here, and humbly submit it to your Lordship, whether it should deserve your notice; and I am desired by several even of the dissenting ministers here to submit the vote and order of the Assembly, enclosed to your Lordship's perusal.

I humbly thank your Lordship for your interest with the honourable Society for settling a school in this place, and likewise in behalf of Mr. Pierson and Mr. Brown, who are returned back to their native country, full of a grateful sense of your Lordship's and the Society's goodness to them; and, I doubt not but they will be very useful in promoting the ends of the Society in the places for which they are appointed.

I beg leave, also, to inform your Lordship, that the growing confusion among the Dissenters in these parts very much tends, among other means, to put thinking and serious persons upon coming over to the Church. Among others there are two or three very worthy young ministers in this colony who, I have reason to believe, from no other reason than the love of truth and order, and a sense of duty, will, in a little time, declare for us, and two of them especially have hopes that the most of their congregations will conform with them. One of them is one Mr. Arnold, who succeeded me at West-Haven, near the College, where I preach once a quarter.

If they can't be admitted to the Society's service in holy orders, which they would earnestly desire, they will do what good they can in a lay capacity; but as they would be glad to be employed by the Society, if it be practicable to have new missions, so I have written to the Secretary to know whether any encouragement could be had for them to go over with such a view. Indeed, there are daily growing and pressing occasions in many parts of these plantations for new missions and missionaries, and I wish to God the Society's

abilities to provide for them might increase in proportion as they do.

I am, may it please your Lordship, your Lordship's most obedient, most dutiful son and servant,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

[*The Clergy of Connecticut to the Bishop of London.*]

Fairfield, in Connecticut,

March 14th, 1733-4.

May it please your Lordship,

It is with great pleasure that we see the success of our labours in the frequent conversions of dissenting teachers in this country, and the good disposition toward the excellent constitution of our Church, growing up among the people wherever the honourable Society have established their missions. Sundry other of their teachers are likely to appear for the Church, and two very honest and ingenious men have declared themselves this winter, one of which is Mr. Ebenezer Punderson, the bearer hereof, who being bound to England with design to apply himself to your Lordship and the honourable Society for holy orders and a mission, we humbly beg leave to lay before your Lordship our recommendation of this worthy gentleman. He has been for above four years a settled minister in the dissenting way to a parish near New-London, called New-Groton; and as he has a good prospect that a considerable number of that parish will conform to the Church with him, he has a solicitous desire to return back in holy orders to that people with whom he has so long dwelt, and among whom he is greatly respected.

As to the circumstances of his people, our distance from them renders us incapable of saying any thing further of them; but as to the gentleman himself, we have well known him for at least seven years, are able, with truth, to assure your Lordship, that he has always been remarked for a person of good parts, earnestly inquisitive after truth, and inde-

fatigably studious in the pursuit of it; that he has read many of the best of our English divines; and has made as great a proficiency in learning as can be expected from his age and circumstances, and that he has ever been esteemed a sober, virtuous and devout person, and remarkable for his contempt of the world; and we are persuaded that it is from a serious and impartial examination of things, and the sincere love of truth and sense of duty, that he has declared himself for our excellent Church and come over to our communion; and he is sincerely well affected to the present government; we humbly, therefore, beseech your Lordship he may be admitted to holy orders, and added to the number of our brethren, and remain,

May it please your Lordship,

Your Lordship's servants,

SAMUEL JOHNSON,
J. WETMORE,
H. CANER,
ISAAC BROWNE.

[*Rev. Mr. Seabury to the Secretary.—Extract.*]

New-London, March 30th, 1734.

Reverend Sir,

These wait upon the honourable Society by the hands of Mr. Ebenezer Punderson, who comes to make his application to my Lord Bishop of London and the Society for Propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts, for orders and a mission. He hath been educated in Yale College, Connecticut, where I had a particular acquaintance with him, and where he always had the character of a sober person. About five years ago he was called to preach in the Presbyterian or Independent way, at Groton, near New-London, where he soon received ordination; but falling under doubts and scruples concerning their power of ordination and method of Church government, and, at the same time, acquainting himself

with the Church of England, he found himself obliged, upon true and regular conviction, to embrace her communion, and thereupon he laid down his ministry in which he was settled to good advantage; but a considerable number of the people of that place being also convinced of the reasonableness and necessity of Church Communion, and having strong affection for the person of Mr. Punderson, on account of his abilities and pious, exemplary life, have been very solicitous with him to make his application to the honourable Society for Propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts for a mission to that place. In testimony of which, they have signed a desire or petition to the honourable Society, with the promise of contributing a certain sum considerably to his support and maintenance, and it is most probable that many more will conform to the Church of England upon better knowledge of it and acquaintance with it.

[*Rev. Mr. Beach to the Secretary.*]

Newtown, in Connecticut,

August 7th, 1735.

Reverend Sir,

I think it my duty to acquaint the venerable Society with the present state of my parish, although the alteration since my last has not been very considerable. I have baptised twenty-nine children and admitted twenty-five persons more to the communion, so that the number of our communion now at Newtown, Reading, and the places adjacent, is ninety-five. I preach frequently and administer the Sacrament at Ridgefield, being about eighteen miles distance from the place where I dwell, where there are about fourteen or eighteen families of very serious and religious people, who have a just esteem of the Church of England, and are very desirous to have the opportunity of worshipping God in that way. I have constantly preached, on a Sunday at Newtown, and the other at Reading; and after I have preached at Read-

ing in the day-time, I perform divine service and preach at Newtown in the evening; and although I have not that success I could wish for, yet I do, and hope I always shall, faithfully endeavour (as far as my poor ability will allow) to promote that good work, that the venerable Society sent and maintained me for.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your most humble servant,

JOHN BEACH.

[*Rev. Mr. Sedbury to the Secretary.*]

New-London, August 22d, 1735.

Reverend Sir,

By this opportunity, for which I have long waited, (otherwise my accounts of the year past would have come much earlier.) I have the satisfaction of informing the honourable Society that my congregation increaseth; that there are one hundred people commonly attending divine service in the summer season, which is double the number that attended constantly at my first coming; that I have had seven new communicants, and baptised thirteen infants the year past; and beside my attendance of the Church at New-London, I have always, from the beginning of my mission, preached at Norwich, a town about fourteen miles from New-London, three times a year, until it was put under the care of the Rev. Mr. Punderson; and sundry times have preached lectures at North Groton; and during the absence of the Rev. Mr. Punderson, in his voyage to England for orders and a mission, I preached there once a month on Sundays, by consent of the Church at New-London, and in this instant, August, I preached at Windham, a place about twenty-six miles from New-London, to a congregation of eighty people, of whom some stayed sundry hours with me after sermon was over, and were desirous to be informed concerning the Church of England; and upon my conversing with them they con-

fessed that the Church had been sadly misrepresented, and that they should have a more favourable opinion of it for the future, and desired that I would come again; and in justice to the members of the Church of England, in New-London, I am obliged to observe that they treat me with great respect and affection, and are very just in paying me the value of their promised subscriptions, which I receive by way of contribution every Sunday after evening service, and I must own further, that the dissenting party also are very civil and obliging to me.

But though the Church at New-London hath increased, yet it hath met with great losses and disadvantages, of which the honourable Society will be sensible when I assure them that there is not one man of any considerable estate or circumstances remaining in the Church at New-London, who first requested the Society for a minister. The worthy Mr. Stackmaple, who laboured with abundance of zeal, and freely contributed his estate to the erecting of the Church, is since dead; he was a gentleman of great charity and virtue, and was the collector of his Majesty's customs in this colony. The honourable Major Merritt, who hath subscribed £50 toward the building of the Church, is since dead. The honourable Major Pryor, who gave £100 to the building of the Church, is since removed, and of the common people, who were the first petitioners to the Society, Mr. Jarrard Peel, Mr. Daniel Apley, Mr. Samuel Fairbank, are dead; and Mr. Thomas Mumford, Mr. James Packer, Mr. Giles Goddard, Mr. Thomas Eldridge, Mr. Joseph Latham, who are all men of good estates, dwelling in South Groton, are put into the Rev. Mr. Punderson's parish in North Groton, though they ever looked on themselves to belong to the Church at New-London, as is evident from there being three of them always chosen of the vestry of New-London; and they have always been at equal charges with those living at New-London Church, and not at North Groton, and are much nearer to Church at New-London, South Groton being parted from New-London only by a river half a mile wide; and the honourable Society, I humbly conceive, were moved to place South Groton in Mr. Punderson's mission at his request and

representation of the case only, for the people never requested it nor expected it, and still attend oftenest at the Church at New-London.

But notwithstanding these losses and disadvantages, the Church at New-London grows, and I trust will grow and increase, by the blessing of Divine Providence and the countenance and charity of your honourable Corporation. And I can assure the honourable Society, that my utmost diligence is employed in their service, and that I shall always embrace every opportunity of enlarging the influence of their extensive Church.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Yours and the honourable Society's

Most obedient and most humble servant,

SAM'L SEABURY.

[*Rev. Mr. Seabury to the Secretary.*]

New-London, in New-England;

August 11th, 1736.

Reverend Sir,

You will receive the trouble of this to acquaint the honourable Society of my success in promoting their designs, which hath been something remarkable at Hebron, an inland town in this colony, about thirty miles distance from New-London. Some of the inhabitants of that place, about the 20th of January last, desired me to preach among them, which I did to a numerous congregation, who attended the service of the common prayers with great seriousness; and when the service was concluded, there stayed of the company about thirty or forty persons, inquiring concerning the Church of England, and proposing the vulgar objections against it, beside many others which were raised entirely from falsehoods, and had no shadow of truth to support them; to all which I answered them with truth, and the best reasons and arguments that my understanding and know-

ledge could suggest, and in this manner I conversed with them at least four hours, who, in fine, appeared very much surprised to find that they had always been very prejudiced with so many false notions about the Church; wondering how men could leave its pious and holy communion, and, most of all, that any could have the conscience to load the established Church with so many odious and injurious slanders.

They earnestly desired me to come again, and at their importunity I have visited them six times, twice of which hath been on Sundays. More than twenty families there and in some neighbouring places do embrace the Church; and when I was last there, which was on the first day of this instant, August, I administered the Sacrament to fourteen communicants.

They are very desirous of a missionary, but defer offering any petition to the Society for Propagating the Gospel, having been informed that the Society are not in a condition at present to establish any new missions; but they have importuned me to visit them, and administer the Sacrament among them, four times a year, to which I have given them encouragement, till I could inform the honourable Society and receive their commands.

As to the Church in New-London, it continueth in nearly the same state as when I wrote last, which is about last September, since which I have baptised nine, of whom one was adult, and the communicants are seventeen.

The people here continue to treat me in a very handsome manner, and annually do something more than make good their obligations in contributing to my support.

Reverend Sir, your,

And the honourable Society's most dutiful

And most obedient servant,

SAM'L SEABURY.

[*Rev. Mr. Beach to the Secretary.—Extract.*]

Newtown, in New-England,

September 8th, 1736.

Reverend Sir,

Since my last I have baptised twenty-five children and five adults, and have admitted to the communion two persons more; the whole number of my communicants is now one hundred and five; but by reason of our people living very distant from each other, I seldom have more than fifty communicants together at once, and for that reason I administer that Sacrament every other Sunday. I have lately, upon the repeated invitations of the people of Newark, in New-Jersey, visited them. I performed divine service two Sundays, and had about three or four hundred hearers; they appeared very desirous of having a minister of the Church of England settled among them, and are now about sending a memorial to the venerable Society for that end, and have earnestly desired me to certify that honourable Board of my willingness to be removed, if they see fit to erect a mission, and remove me thither.

Thereupon, I thought it my duty to acquaint that honourable body that I am perfectly contented with my present condition, and should have no inclination to remove if I did not think that I could do much more good there than I can in this parish; and that within a little time there will be, it is probable, at Newark, the largest congregation within two hundred miles; and it is very likely they will soon be able to maintain a minister without any assistance, though at present they cannot well do it; but in this I entirely submit to the wisdom of the venerable Society,

And am, Reverend Sir,

Your most humble servant,

JOHN BEACH.

[*Rev. Mr. Caner to the Secretary.*]

Fairfield, in New-England,

13th September, 1736.

Reverend Sir,

In a letter by the Rev. Mr. McSparran, I acquainted the honourable Society of my safe arrival in New-England; since then I have so good a state of health as to be capable of serving my parish in a constant way. The professors of the Church of England here increase in numbers and seriousness.

The Dissenters among us are busily employed in examining into the conduct of the missionaries in order to have whereof to accuse us; some instances, misinterpreted, I understand they pitch upon. I trust they will not find any instance in my conduct to make the foundation of a complaint. I am not conscious that I have laid myself open to misinterpretation, and as to real misconduct, I defy them; however, as they seem resolved to make thorough work, if any complaint of this nature should come before the honourable Society, I beg I may have notice of it, and an opportunity to vindicate myself from any such aspersions. I hope, when we are sufficiently sifted and tried, we shall come out purer and less exceptionable.

The particular state of my parish at this time the honourable Society will find expressed in my *notitia parochialis*, underwritten, to which I beg leave to refer.

I am the honourable Society's

Most dutiful and obedient, and, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

HENRY CANER.

[*Rev. Mr. Arnold to the Secretary.*]

West Haven, in Connecticut,

September 22d, 1736.

Reverend Sir,

I performed divine service last Sunday at Milford, one of the most considerable towns in Connecticut Colony, where the use of the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments, or the reading the Scripture in divine service, was never before known. There was a very numerous auditory, most attentive and desirous to be instructed in the worship of the Church of England; but these who are looking towards the Church are commonly the poorer sort of people; for the staff of government being in the hands of the Dissenters, who rule the Church with an iron rod, those who receive honour one of another set themselves at a distance, and allow their rage and revenge to increase in proportion to the increase of the Church. That God, in mercy to our land, may continue and prosper that honourable Society, is, and shall be the fervent prayer of their, and your most obliged, devoted, humble servant,

JONATHAN ARNOLD.

[*From the Clergy of New-England to the Secretary.—Extract.*]

Fairfield, in New-England,

March 29th, 1739.

Reverend Sir,

Notwithstanding it has once and again been declared by the Attorney and Solicitor-General, (and approved of by the Lords Justices in their letter to the Lieutenant-Governor of Boston, dated October 7th, 1725.) that there is no establishment of any religion in these colonies, nor can be without

his most sacred Majesty's explicit consent; yet this government have taken upon them to make an establishment of the Congregational way, (as they call it,) appears by several acts in their printed law book, and do act as an establishment, and to treat the Church of England as Dissenters. They have, indeed, made a law by which they pretended to exempt the people of the Church of England from paying to the support of their ministers and the building of their meeting-houses, but they have contrived several methods to elude it.

2. Among which, a principal contrivance is to make certain funds in each town to be let out to use for raising the salaries of their ministers, without any tax upon the people. This first began at Fairfield, by the sale of certain lands, sequestered by the proprietors of that town for the support of the ministry, the money arising from which sale they divided to each parish according to their propriety, only excluding the members of the Church of England in each parish from any share or benefit in this sale, though there were many of them as considerable proprietors as any of those who were admitted to enjoy it. And the success with which this unjust action was attended has put them upon much the same measures throughout the colony; and one means of making such funds is by the sale of seven new townships of common lands belonging to this government, wherein (as we apprehend) the people of the Church of England have equally a right, according to their proportion, with the rest of the people of the government; and the money arising from the sale of these lands they have appropriated either to the schools, or to what they call the established ministry of this government, at the election of the several towns, (as will appear by their printed acts to this purpose,) so that, according to their sense of their law, we of the Church of England are excluded from any benefit of that sale.

Another of these devices for raising of the above mentioned funds has been by a bill, (not yet indeed passed into an act, though we have reason to believe the design is not yet laid aside,) to appropriate the loan of their last commission of £50,000 of bills of credit to that purpose.

To prevent these proceedings, the people of our Church

have laid an humble address before the General Assembly, signed by more than six hundred and thirty males above sixteen years old, (and the number could have amounted to above seven hundred if all would have had opportunity to sign,) praying that they might have their proportion of these public moneys toward the support of their ministers; but they have been pleased in their last Assembly to negative that petition, so that our people can expect no favour or justice from our government in this regard, and beg of us to lay their oppressed state before the Society.

3. Another grievance that we have to complain of is, the case of sundry people (to the number of fifty families) in the westernmost parts of this colony, chiefly belonging to Horse-neck and Stamford, living so near to the Parish Church of Rye, as that they can and do attend upon the ministrations of the Reverend Mr. Wetmore, who also does frequently officiate among them, to which he was requested by their joint application to him. When, according to the tenor of the above-mentioned act, he demanded his due proportion of the tax, viz., what was paid by the professors of the Church of England, payment was refused; upon which he commenced an action against the collector, which went through the courts and was finally lost. The people, perceiving themselves destitute of any hopes of relief in a course of law, applied themselves in an humble address to the General Assembly, praying for a redress of this grievance, which address was set aside, and nothing was done for their relief; so that they, and all others living but a few miles from any Church of England, whatever care and pains the minister may take in visiting and administering to them, shall, notwithstanding the said act, be obliged to pay to the support of dissenting ministers, unless relief can be obtained from home.

4. That we may be as little tedious as possible, we will pass by several other instances whereby they have endeavoured to elude the act they had made in our favour, and proceed lastly to lay before the Society the case of the Rev. Mr. Arnold, which is as follows: William Greyson, of London, Esq., made a donation of a piece of land in New-Haven to him, as trustee for the Church of England, to build a

Church on, and when he went to take possession and make improvement of said land by ploughing the same, he was opposed by a great number of people, being resolute that no Church should be built there, who, in a riotous and tumultuous manner, being (as we have good reason to believe) put upon it by some in authority, and of the chief men in the town, beat his cattle and abused his servants, threatening both his and their lives to that degree, that he was obliged to quit the field. And though he made presentment against sundry of them, for breach of the peace, to the civil authority, yet they refuse to take cognizance of it, and so he could obtain no relief.

We beg leave to subscribe ourselves, Reverend Sir, the venerable Society's and your most humble and most obedient servants,

SAMUEL SEABURY,

SAM'L JOHNSON,

EBEN'R PUNDERSON,

J. WETMORE,

JONA. ARNOLD,

HENRY CANER,

JOHN BEACH.

[Rev. Mr. Punderson to the Secretary.—Extract.]

Groton, June 18th, 1739.

Reverend Sir,

There is not any more considerable alteration in the parishies under my care than that of the spirit and temper of our dissenting brethren, many of which, from being revilers and haters of our Church, are brought to have a good opinion of it, and occasionally attend our worship. I believe that at the last Christmas, and upon a Lord's day since, there met in our Church upwards of four hundred persons who behaved soberly and devoutly, many of which had been our bitterest enemies, which to me is an unspeakable comfort. Upon the earnest desire of a considerable number, I have made a journey to Middletown, about forty miles from my home, and

preached to a sober body of people, near one hundred, two of which have since come and joined themselves to our communion.

Reverend Sir, I am,

Yours, and the Society's most obedient servant,

EBEN'R PUNDERSON.

[*Rev. Mr. Beach to the Secretary.—Extract.*]

Newtown, August 24th, 1739.

Reverend Sir,

I have been here almost seven years, and have baptised one hundred and sixty-four, of which thirteen are adults, and have one hundred and twenty-three communicants, but they live so far distant from each other, that commonly I can administer to no more than about fifty at once, which occasions my administering it the more frequently; and, though I meet with many discouragements, yet I have this satisfaction, that all my communicants (one or two excepted) do adorn their profession by a sober, righteous and godly life.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your very humble servant,

JOHN BEACH.

[*From the Clergy of New-England to the Secretary.—Extract.*]

New-London, May 4th, 1740.

Reverend Sir,

We, the Clergy of New-England, convened at New-London, beg leave to represent to the honourable Society the state of a considerable congregation of the Church of England settled at Hopkinton and the parts adjacent. This town

has been for some years a place of resort to several creditable families of Conformists, whose inclination or employment has caused them to remove from Boston into the country, to whom many of the old inhabitants, both of the Church and dissenting persuasions, have united themselves in promoting the Episcopal Church, being induced thereto by a monthly lecture preached among them, and some encouragement they received of being recommended to the Society's favour; there is likewise a probability of a large increase by the addition of many others who have purchased farms in the same town, so as to possess near a third part of the township, in order to settle themselves or children thereon, provided they can enjoy a constant public worship of the Church of England, and procure some assistance toward the support of an Episcopal minister to reside with them, which they express an earnest desire of, and a readiness to contribute to the utmost of their ability towards his comfortable subsistence.

We are the honourable Society's,

And, Reverend Sir,

Your most humble servants,

ARTH. BROWNE,	JOHN USHER,
SAM'L SEABURY,	HENRY CANER,
JOHN BEACH,	ROGER PRICE,
EBEN'R PUNDERSON,	JAMES HONEYMAN,
SAM'L JOHNSON	JAMES MACSPARRAN

[*Rev. Mr. Morris to the Secretary.—Extract.*]

West Haven, September 13th, 1740.

Reverend Sir,

I was received by the Church people with no small pleasure, for, upon Mr. Arnold leaving them, they seemed to despair of having another to succeed him; beside, the Dissenters used to boast and affirm confidently that the Society

would never send here another missionary, which was some mortification to them, who are a people indeed not to be despised, and are ready enough to express their gratitude. I must further say of them, that they are the most versed in casuistry of any people I ever met; I mean of those that can only read English. The Archbishop of Canterbury's Treatise on Church Government, and the late Archbishop of Dublin's Collection of Cases, with several other books, have been read here to good purpose, and what they are further to be valued for is, that their conforming to the Church has exposed them to many inconveniences and oppression from the Dissenters. I have two warrants by me, granted before my time, to take up two men in Waterbury for not frequenting their meetings; and when one of them offered to give his reasons why he could not go to their extempore prayers, he was silenced and ordered to prison, or pay his fine; two more in North Haven were some time in jail before my arrival, for not paying their rates to the dissenting teachers, which is contrary to a law made here in our favour, (as I am informed,) at a time when they were apprehensive of losing their charter. The governor of this colony is elected yearly, and one Williams, who was lately rector of the Seminary in New-Haven, quitted that office with a view to be elected governor next year; but if he succeeds, we are likely to have a troublesome neighbour.

Though there be some hot spirits among the Dissenters, especially their teachers and those in power, yet there are many others more moderate, and who seem well affected to our Church, and are apt to frequent it.

Should I give you an account of the geography of my mission, you would find it large enough for a Diocese; but I would not be understood to mean this by way of complaint of the difficulty and length of the roads; and if I may be allowed to complain of any thing, it must be of the wretched fanaticism that runs so high in this country, and a body would be apt to think higher than it did in England in Cromwell's time, which does not so well suit one of my complexion; yet I have been serviceable in the Church, and will endeavour to be more so.

I have been informed since I came here, that the Dissenters

in North Haven have obliged the Church people to contribute towards building a meeting-house, and sent one poor fellow to jail who was not in a capacity to pay his cess; however, this may be contrary to law here, yet it is found, by repeated experience, that a poor Churchman can expect no redress in any court here.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your most obliged and very obedient servant,

THEO. MORRIS.

October 28th, 1740.

[*Rev. Mr. Johnson to the Secretary.—Extract.*]

Stratford, in N. E., Nov. 10th, 1740.

Reverend Sir,

As to the complaint we designed to lay before the Society about the money arising from the sale of the seven new townships, the event is that, rather than the Church should have any share in it, the last Assembly have repealed the act that vested in the several dissenting ministers their dividends of it, exclusive of the Church, so that now, by a former act, it belongs to the schools, though I imagine they yet have some contrivance to exclude us from any advantage from it; for the increase of the Church in this country is very displeasing to those at the helm, and disposes them to distress us in all the ways they can, and particularly by so explaining the law, in their execution of it, as to oblige many of our people to pay their public dues to the support of their ministers and building their meeting-houses, if they happen to live at such a distance from our Churches as renders a constant attendance impracticable, by which means some of them have been hauled to jail, and there been forced to abide 'till they paid the utmost farthing. This has been the case with some people at a village called Cheshire, who have lately complained to me; and this is threatened and doubtless will

be shortly executed upon the people of another village called Scotland, belonging to Simsbury, a town sixty miles northward.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

SAM'L JOHNSON.

[*Rev. Mr. Punderson to the Bishop of London.*]

N. Groton, 12th Dec., 1741.

My Lord,

The duties and labours of my mission are exceedingly increased by the surprising enthusiasms that rage among us, the centre of which is the place of my residence, a short account of which I shall trouble your Lordship with. Since Mr. Whitefield has been in this country, there has been a great number of vagrant preachers, the most remarkable of which is Mr. Davenport, of Long Island, who came to New-London in July, pronounced your ministers unconverted, and, by his boisterous behaviour and vehement crying, "Come to Christ," many were *stirred*, as the phrase is, and made the most terrible and affecting noise, that was heard a mile from the place. He came to this Society, acted in the same manner five days, was followed by innumerable [people;] some could not endure the house, saying that it seemed to them more like the infernal regions, than the place of worshipping the God of Heaven; many, after the amazing horror and distress that seized them, received comfort, (as they term it,) and five or six of these young men in this Society are continually going about, especially in the night, converting, as they call it, their fellow men; two of these act as their ministers, and they affirm, converted above two hundred in an Irish town about twenty miles back in the country. Their meetings are almost every night in this and the neighbouring parishes, and the most astonishing effects attend them: screechings, faintings, convulsions, visions, ap-

parent death for twenty or thirty hours, actual possession with evil spirits, as they own themselves. The spirit in all is remarkably bitter against the Church of England. Two who were "struck," and proceeded in this way of exhorting and praying, until actually possessed, came to me, asked the same questions: "Are you born again?"—"Have you the witness of the Spirit?" &c., as they all do; used the same texts of Scripture; taught the same doctrines; called me Beelzebub, the prince of devils; and, in their possession, burnt about £1,200. They have since been to me, asked my forgiveness, and bless God that He has restored them to the spirit of a sound mind. There are at least twenty or thirty of these lay holders-forth, within ten miles of my house, who hold their meetings every night in the week in some place or other, excepting Saturday night, and incredible pains are taken to seduce and draw away the members of my Church; but, blessed be God, we still rather increase.

I am, my Lord,

Your obedient servant,

EBEN'R PUNDERSON.

[*Rev. Mr. Morris to the Secretary.*]

Derby, June 20th, 1741.

Reverend Sir,

Since I wrote before, I made it my business to be further acquainted with the people, especially the Dissenters, many of whom I found, on my travel, well affected to our worship, and ready to conform, had they an opportunity of a Church at a reasonable distance. Others, I have heard since, object to their not being attended as often as they could wish. This proves too strong an objection among weaker people, where dissenting teachers are so numerous. There are others who, in their private conversations, profess a great liking for the Church, will readily own what they cannot be reconciled to

in the Dissenters' scheme, especially the sort of ordination first set up in this country; and though they may be brought to approve our liturgy, notwithstanding all the industry of their teachers, yet, as they are men who have little places and employments, or obtain hopes of having them, they will not easily be persuaded to conform. This last difficulty is the greatest I have met with; indeed, the governing party, who are the most violent, seem to be a little more moderate than they have been, but their moderation is owing to their being afraid of England. I have lately been at Simsbury, where I found about thirty females of our communion; they are in hopes of having a minister at last, and have accordingly prepared some timber to build a Church. I remitted their rates, which amount to about fifty pounds of this currency, to help them forward with the building. I do not mention this as an act of generosity, for, however I may have a right to protect them from the Dissenters, I think I ought not to apply their money to my own use, since they are too remote to be visited above twice a year at most, considering how many parishes I have beside to attend, and, indeed, remote enough from one another. I urged upon my brethren at the Convention to assist me in attending Simsbury, which some consented to do, so that they can be served now eight times a year, and this, I hope, will keep them in heart.

I have taken another Church into my care at Wallingford, which consists of twelve families. I engaged to attend them once a quarter, which they seem to be satisfied with, for they know it is as much as I can do for them. I procured Mr. Thomson, whom I mentioned before, to officiate every Sunday in some one parish in my absence, and as his prudence and discretion have rendered him entirely agreeable to the people, he proves very serviceable to me.

I must further acquaint you that, in many places, there are some undivided lands laid out for the use of the ministry; and those of the Church party who are proprietors think it reasonable their proportion should be appropriated to the use of their minister, and are ready enough to engage in a lawsuit if there was hopes of success in England; indeed, if Dr. McSparran gain his cause, it will pave the way to do the

Church a very considerable service.* Since I came to this mission there have been added to our communion eight persons, four of whom conformed lately; six more have conformed, but have not been yet at the Sacrament. This, Sir, is all I have to add to my first letter, dated last September, and which I hope has not miscarried.

I am, Reverend Sir, your most obliged

And very obedient servant,

THEO. MORRIS.

[Rev. Mr. Punderson to the Secretary.—*Extract.*]

N. Groton, 20th December, 1741.

Reverend Sir,

I would inform the venerable Society, &c., that enthusiasm exceedingly rages in the parts under my care, but especially in this; the most amazing screechings, screamings, faintings, convulsions and visions attend it, and are made the inseparable marks of conversion and the new birth; and two persons in this parish have been so wonderfully wrought upon in this manner as to become actually possessed by a devil, as all grant; and one of them who, by the good providence of God, is restored to the use of reason, confesses the Spirit, in these demoniacs and enthusiasts, is extremely violent against the established Church; and both I and all under my care are declared both by teacher and people to be unconverted, and going straight down to hell. 'Tis amazing how this wild scene prevails, and how it will end God only knows. It increases my labours to that degree, that I can scarce spend a whole day in my study or family. I have twice been desired to preach to a large congregation of Seventh-day Baptists, in Westerly, and complied with their desires.

I am yours, and the honourable Society's

Real friend and servant,

EBEN'R PUNDERSON.

* Dr. McSparran was then engaged in prosecuting a suit he had brought for the recovery of certain lands in Narragansett, which he claimed in behalf of the Church. The Rhode Island Documents will furnish the history of this proceeding.

[*Rev. Mr. Punderson to the Secretary.—Extract.*]

N. Groton, March 30th, 1742.

Reverend Sir,

There never was more pressing need of good books among us than in this astonishing season, in which the wildest enthusiasm and superstition prevail; and it is attended with the most bitter fruits of uncharitableness and spiritual pride, an instance or two of which I shall trouble the honourable Society with. Some time since, immediately after I had preached a sermon in Norwich, one of these enthusiasts came to me and demanded my experience; (which is very common;) his request being denied, he pronounced me unconverted, and, not only going myself, but leading all under my charge, down to hell. Soon after, he was attended with a dumb spirit, and uttered nothing for five or six days, except two or three blasphemous expressions, viz., Go tell the brethren I am risen; at another time, Suffer little children to come unto me, &c. There also came another of these exhorters (as they are called here) to my house, attended by many; declared me as upright and as exemplary a person as any he knew in the world, yet he knew I was unconverted, and leading my people down to hell; he affirmed that he was sent with a message from God, and felt the Spirit upon him, &c.; he seemed sincere. Soon after, Mr. Croswell, the dissenting teacher in this parish, with two attendants, came singing to my house, pronounced me unconverted, yet, at the time, declared that he did not know me guilty of any crime. I assured him that, in my opinion, it was a greater crime for him thus to murder my soul, usefulness and reputation in the world, than for me to attempt his natural life; and that he certainly must be a worse man, thus, in cool blood and under a religious pretence, to pronounce damnation against me, than for a common swearer to say to another "God damn you;" since this he is not so fierce as before.

At the first rise of this enchanting delusion, I was under melancholy apprehensions that the infant Church of England, in this and the adjacent places, would be crushed, those being the centre of the religious delirium; some have gone after it, but more been added, and I am more and more convinced of the promise of our blessed Lord, that the gates of hell shall never prevail, &c. My labours abundantly increase, and I have scarce been at home a week together the past winter; sometimes I preach two or three sermons a week, beside constantly on the Lord's-day, and I have good hope that my labour is not in vain.

Your and the honourable Society's

Real friend and servant,

ELEEN PUNDERSON.

[*Rev. Mr. Seabury to the Secretary.—Extract.*]

New-London, in New-England,

May 3d, 1742.

Reverend Sir,

I observe in the collection of papers aforesaid, page 37, order the 23d, a direction to the several missionaries to send an account of the founding and building the Churches in their respective parishes, and how the same have been supplied with ministers, and also an account of the glebe, &c. In compliance therewith, I state that, from the records of St. James' Church, at New-London, it appears that the said Church was built by subscription; the first bears date June 25th, 1725. That on the 27th of September following, seven of the members of the Church of England did, by an instrument under their hand, form themselves into a committee for the purchasing a convenient place in New-London, and for erecting and building a Church for the service of Almighty God, according to the liturgy of the Church of England as by law established; that at the same meeting the Reverend Mr. McSparran, the Society's missionary at Narra-

gansett, was made treasurer; that on June the 20th, 1726, a carpenter was agreed with for a wood frame; that on the 9th of August following the timber was brought to the ground; on the first of October the frame was raised and completed, and on the 28th of November, 1727, the house was enclosed, glazed, the underfloor laid, a neat desk and pulpit finished, and in this state was the Church at New-London when I arrived there, December 9th, 1730, in the service of the honourable Society.

New-London is a small town, standing by a pleasant river about two miles from the sea, [sound,] the principal port of Connecticut colony, first settled by the Independents and a few Anabaptists and sort of Quaker Baptists.

The first members of the Church of England who founded St. James' Church were either Europeans, not long settled here, or persons brought up in other colonies. The government here makes no provision for the Church, though they commonly grant large tracts of land in every town for the advantage of the Independents; but the Church at New-London has neither glebe nor parsonage-house, and except a weekly contribution of its members for the use of the minister, which amounts to about a crown sterling per week, it is wholly supported by the charity of the honourable Society.

The sectaries here seem crumbling into more parties and divisions daily, branding each other with anathemas. The Church under my care remains steadfast.

Yours, and the honourable Society's

Most humble and most obedient servant,

SAMUEL SEABURY.

[*Rev. Mr. Caner to the Secretary.—Extract.*]

Fairfield, New-England, July 1st, 1742.

Reverend Sir,

Enthusiasm has made no progress at Fairfield, and the effects of it at Stamford, Norwalk, Ridgefield, &c., where it

has a large spread, has been the reconciling many sober, considerate people to the communion of our Church. In order to prevent as much as possible the spreading of enthusiastic principles, both now and hereafter, among us, I have applied myself closely to the duty of catechizing young and old who do not appear to have sufficiently digested the grounds of our most holy faith; the catechumens, being divided into three classes, are examined and instructed, according to their several improvements, every Lord's-day after sermon, in the afternoon.

The venerable Society's

Most dutiful and obedient, and, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

HENRY CANER.

[*The Clergy of Connecticut to the Bishop of London.*]

Fairfield, in Connecticut,

August 24th, 1742.

May it please your Lordship,

We, your Lordship's clergy of this Colony of Connecticut, humbly beg leave to lay before your Lordship the difficulties which at present affect us. The want of a Bishop to reside among us has been often mentioned as a very great obstruction to the propagation of religion in this remote part of the world; and we take leave upon this occasion to renew our most humble thanks, as for all your Lordship's good offices toward the Church in these plantations, so particularly for your kind attention to the several representations of this nature, which we have formerly made, and your sincere endeavours to obtain this advantage for us, and, since that could not be effected, for the kind provision your Lordship has made for us, as some remedy to this inconvenience, by appointing Commissaries among us under your Lordship's own special direction. But as the number of Clergy within this district

is considerably increased, since the appointment of a Commissary at Boston, we humbly hope your Lordship will excuse us if we presume to suggest, with great submission, whether it might not be highly expedient for your Lordship to appoint a Commissary in this colony; our distances from the Commissary at Boston is such as makes it impracticable for us to attend upon the yearly Convention, and, consequently, to receive the benefit of that appointment. There are now fourteen Churches built and building, and seven Clergymen within this colony, and others daily called for; the nearest of us about one hundred and twenty, and the most of us upward of two hundred miles from Boston; and the charge of such a journey, yearly, is too considerable for our circumstances well to admit of. Beside, the absence from our parishes, which such a distance requires, proves oftentimes great prejudice to our people, not only from the want of publick worship, but likewise in regard they are liable to be seduced by the indefatigable endeavours of enthusiastic teachers, who, since Mr. Whitefield's tour through this colony, have made an astonishing progress.

We would not be thought to prescribe, and therefore bespeak your Lordship's candour, when we presume to mention the Reverend Mr. Johnson, of Stratford, as a person from whose ability, virtue and integrity we might hope all the advantages which such an authority would enable him to derive to us, if your Lordship should think proper to bestow this honour upon him. Your Lordship does not need to be informed, and therefore we forbear to mention, the particular advantages to be enjoyed by the residence of a Commissary among us, especially at a time when enthusiasm, in its worst colors, is daily gaining ground. We flatter ourselves with hopes of your Lordship's pardon and indulgence on this point, and beg to assure your Lordship that we are,

May it please your Lordship,

Your Lordship's obedient servants,

HENRY CANER,

SAMUEL SEABURY,

JOHN BEACH,

EBEN'R PUNDERSON,

RICH'D CANER.

[*Rev. Mr. Johnson to the Bishop of London.—Extract.*]

Stratford, in New-England,

September 5th, 1742.

May it please your Lordship,

This letter accompanies another to your Lordship from my brethren of the Clergy in this colony, wherein they humbly represent the necessity, or, at least, the great advantage of a Commissary to be resident among us, by reason of our great distance from Boston, which, at a medium, is between 150 and 200 miles.

On this occasion I humbly beg leave to join my voice with theirs to the same purpose, (for I do believe, with submission to your Lordship,) that it would be a very considerable means for the promoting the interests of religion and order among us; especially considering how much the Church has increased here within these few years. When I came here there were not one hundred adult persons of the Church in this whole colony, whereas now there are considerably more than two thousand, and at least five or six thousand, young and old; and, since the progress of this strange spirit of enthusiasm, it seems daily very much increasing.

My brethren have, indeed, done me the honour to mention my name to your Lordship. As to this, I beg leave to assure your Lordship that it is from their own motion, and not in the least owing to any influence of mine, that they have so done; and that if your Lordship shall think it fit, at all, to appoint a Commissary in this colony, I shall be very well satisfied to submit to any other person whom your Lordship shall think proper to appoint to preside over us.

May it please your Lordship,

Your Lordship's most dutiful

And most obedient son and servant,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

[*Rev. Mr. Seabury to the Secretary.—Extract.*]

New-London, in New-England, Nov. 2d, 1742.

Reverend Sir,

At Hebron the Church increaseth. I had forty communicants present the last Sacrament. Mr. Barzillai Dean, whom my brethren of the clergy of Connecticut have desired and advised me to recommend to the Society's notice, has attended the Hebron Church the year past, (when I have not been there,) by reading a form of prayer out of the Liturgy of the Church, and sermons of the Church of England divines, to the great edification of the people. In compassion to them, I beg leave to lament to the honourable Society, that poor people's want of a resident minister, who, I am well sensible, might be far more useful to them than it is in my power to be; and to repeat their desire, that Mr. Dean might be permitted to come home for that charge.

At Simsbury, sixty-two miles from New-London, and eight miles west of Connecticut River, and about fifty miles up said river, there is also a large congregation of the Church of England. I have visited them twice in the year past; the last time there were one hundred and thirty adults, who, I was assured, were either real conformists, or desirous of instruction in the doctrine and worship of the Church. They beg to be recommended to the Society's charity, and I expect they will, in a little time, send the Society a token of their sincerity; a copy of a deed of fifty acres of choice land, which they have purchased for a glebe.

At Middletown, one of the most flourishing towns in Connecticut, and lying upon Connecticut River, thirty-two miles from the mouth, and forty miles from New-London, which I have visited twice the year past, there are thirty families of the Church of England, earnestly desiring to be mentioned to the venerable Society, in hopes of their future favours.

I am, Reverend Sir, yours, and the honourable Society's

Most humble and obedient servant,

SAMUEL SEABURY.

[*Churchwardens of New-London to the Secretary.—Extract.*]

New-London, February 26th, 1742-3.

Reverend Sir,

The very great convulsions occasioned here, and in divers other places in this colony, by the breaking out of what is called the New Light, makes this a melancholy juncture to have our Church empty and unsupplied; and the more, in regard that the present discords having set sundry of the most cool and considering people on thinking and reading, there is a promising prospect of those inquiries into religion, ending in a thorough and well-weighted conformity to our Church; and this again makes it the more necessary that this Church should be made happy in the appointment of a missionary, who, for morals, learning and experimental knowledge in the present state of things, might be equal to the difficulties of the present times.

Reverend Sir,

Your most obedient humble servants,

NATHANIEL GREEN, } *Churchwardens.*
EDWARD PALMER, }

[*The Secretary to the Rev. Mr. Johnson, Missionary at Stratford.—Extract.*]

April 25th, 1743.

Reverend Sir,

In order to make some provision, as soon as may be, for those young men recommended by you, that have been educated at your neighbouring Colleges, and are desirous of entering into the service of the Society, they [the Society] are come to a resolution, that in all future appointments of catechists and schoolmasters, a principal regard shall be had to such persons as are already in, or intend to offer themselves candidates for holy orders; that, as vacancies happen, they may be filled with these young men after they have been

ordained Deacons and Priests, in England; and then, with a small stipend, (but of not less than £20 per annum,) from the Society, it is proposed to fix them at places where the inhabitants are able and willing to give as much more, for their officiating to them in the holy functions; and, as the greater missions become vacant, and they are found worthy, to advance them to them, while other deserving young men may succeed to the lesser.

I am, &c.,

P. B.,

(i. e., PHILIP BEACROFT

[*Rev. Mr. Johnson to the Secretary*

Stratford, in New-England,
April 6th, 1743.

Reverend Sir,

Since my last I have baptised sixteen, whereof five were adults and of them four were negroes, and admitted sixteen to the Holy Communion, of which two were candidates for holy orders, whose names were Watkins and Lamson. The late enthusiasm is now abating, (though the venomous effects of it still prevail,) and has driven a great number into the Church, so that there are five or six places wanting ministers greatly, of which Simsbury the most, being at, by far, the greatest distance; and there are five or six valuable young candidates that would gladly serve the Church, and to very good advantage, if they could be encouraged to go home for orders; and, as the Society may think proper to make New-London vacant by removing Mr. Seabury, we should all be very glad if that place might be kept vacant till one or other of our candidates could go home for it. Mr. Thomson, whom I have several times mentioned as having long served the Church in a lay capacity, and done much good, would be a very suitable and useful person in that place. And I beg the Society to give us leave to recommend two or three in the fall, for new places, if possible, though it were with a

view of but small salaries. Indeed, I humbly hope the venerable Board will excuse us if the pressing necessity of the times should prevail upon us to recommend any one for orders, though we should not have opportunity to hear from you. Mr. Dean is said to have done good service at Hebron, and, I conclude, will be recommended by the Convention.

The Church in this town has so increased of late that our house will not hold us, which has obliged us to build a new Church, for which £1,500 of our money has been subscribed, and we have got timber and are going on vigorously. It is to be sixty feet long and forty-five feet wide, and twenty-four feet high to the roof; with a steeple sixteen feet square, to be one hundred and twenty feet high; and eight feet the Chancel, which is to have a library on one side and vestry on the other. And we should be very thankful if any generous benefactors could be found that would contribute books to our library, which are very much wanted, and would be most eagerly read by many of our people, who are very inquisitive after Christian knowledge.

My *Notitia Parochialis* is as follows:

I. No. of families in this town, about.....	400
II. No. of baptised here and places adjacent by the missionary of the town,	617
III. No. of baptised since my last, of which five were adults and of them were four negroes,	16
IV. No. of actual communicants here and at Ripton, Of which, were admitted the last half year,....	166
V. No. of those that profess the Church, families,..	16
VI. No. of Dissenters from all the rest, Papists, only	89
VII. No. of heathens, beside anabaptised negroes,...	1
VIII. No. of converts, no remarkable instance, they being generally a sober people.	10

I have drawn on the treasurer for my salary, due to last Lady-day, of the same date with this letter,

And remain, Reverend Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

[From *Mr. Stewart to the Secretary*.—*Extract*.]

New-London, in New-England,

January 14th, 1743.

Reverend Sir,

The unhappy difficulties our Church in this town labours under at present oblige me, in behalf of the congregation and self, to give you the trouble of this. Some time ago the Rev. Mr. Seabury obtained the consent of the venerable Society to remove to Hempstead; the Rev. Mr. Morris was appointed to fill the vacancy, which (for some reasons) was not pleasing to the people, who made application to the Rev. Mr. Commissary Price, who, together with the Rev. Dr. Mc-Sparran, came hither, and after strict and impartial examination of both parties, the Rev. Mr. Morris resigned his claim to the Church. Now we have certain intelligence that some underhand endeavours are used here to fill our Church without our privity, with one of their own creatures, in particularly with one Mr. Dean, a person of no other attainments than what are usually acquired by the low education of some men in this country. We beg leave by you, Reverend Sir, humbly and with the deepest submission, to represent to our wise, charitable and truly provident patrons, the Society, that New-London, being the seat of his Majesty's custom-house and so the port of greatest note in the colony, and, in many other respects, as a city set on a hill which cannot be hid, a missionary of mean and ordinary abilities, who might, perhaps, discharge the duties of his function with advantage in the more enclosed, remote and obscure settlements, where defects and informity to rubric and canon might pass with less observation, would have a direct tendency to bring the Church here into contempt, and the more so, as the Independent minister of this town has a well established character, and is in every respect the most superior person of his order in this colony. Permit us, therefore, to implore the compassion of the venerable Board to a Church

like to be left in a tottering and ticklish condition; and as none of the worthy gentlemen on the mission already in New-England have mentioned their desire of being removed to us, and as he that was appointed could not make us happy, we earnestly entreat that none may be sent that goes from this country but such as the Reverend Mr. Commissary Price will recommend to the venerable Society to be appointed to this Church. We have a good character of one Mr. Cleverly [*] from some worthy gentlemen of the Clergy, and as he has been bred up in the Church, if we can prevail on him to go home for orders, doubtless he will make us happy and all easy; but if we fail of him, and that no other to the Commissary's liking offers before he writes, then we humbly beg leave to rely on the choice of the venerable Board, and earnestly entreat that a gentleman regularly educated at home, and always bred up in the Church of England, may be singled out for the service of the Church here, which will be very unlikely to keep it's ground, much less to thrive, under the ministry of a man of incompetent capacity, tinctured with Independency, or, in the least, addicted to any kind of informity or vice.

[*Rev. Mr. Seabury to the Secretary*.]

Reverend Sir,

The last half year has produced nothing remarkable with regard to the Church, which continueth steadfast in the midst of the wildest enthusiasms; a most extraordinary instance of which happened here, in the sixth day of this instant, being the Lord's-day, when a large congregation gathered in the street, made a fire, and, in the sight of the sun, burned a great number of books of divinity, and, among others, Bishop Beveridge's *Thoughts on Religion*; and, on the next day, in a public assembly, threw down of wearing apparel to be burned to the value of one hundred pounds sterling, but by some means they were restrained from executing this last attempt.

* We think the name intended is Cleveland.—En.

The Society will observe by the *Not. Paroch.*, here enclosed, that the communicants at New-London have increased, three of whom are late conformists from the Independents.

I have, since my last, beside my visit to Hebron, where the Church still prospers, visited Simsbury, sixty-two miles from New-London, where there is a great prospect of a flourishing Church.

For my last quarter's salary, due me the day of the date hereof, I have drawn in favour of Daniel Lothrop, which I hope the Society's treasurer will honour.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Yours, and the honourable Society's

Most obedient and most humble servant,

SAMUEL SEABURY.

New-London, March 25th, 1743.

[*Rev. Mr. Beach to the Secretary.*]

Reading, in New-England,

April 20th, 1743.

Reverend Sir,

The enclosed is the state of my parish, which is very little altered in this last half year. My people are not at all shaken, but rather confirmed in their principles by the spirit of enthusiasm that rages among the Independents round about us, and many of the Dissenters, observing how steadfast our people are in their faith and practice, while those of their own denomination are easily carried away with every kind of doctrine, and are now sunk into the utmost confusion and disorder, have conceived a much better opinion of our Church than they formerly had, and a considerable number in this colony have lately conformed, and several Churches are now building where they have no minister. Indeed, there is scarce a town in which there is not a considerable number professing themselves of the Church of England, and

very desirous to have it settled among them; but God only knows when and how they can be provided for. Were there in this country but one of the Episcopal order, to whom young men might apply for ordination without the expense and danger of a voyage to England, many of our towns might be supplied which now must remain destitute. To express this opinion to the venerable Society (I am sensible) may be deemed impertinent, but I am moved to it by hearing so frequently numbers of serious people of our Church lamenting their unhappiness, that they can rarely enjoy that worship which they hunger and thirst after, there being so small a number of Clergymen in this country; while Presbyterians, Independents, and all sects are here perfect in their kind. But, although we have not the utmost that we could wish for, yet I bless God for the pious care and charity of the venerable Society, to which it is owing that so many hundreds of souls are provided for in this government; and had it not been for that, we have reason to think there would not have been at this day as much as one congregation in this colony worshipping God according to the Church of England.

I have this day drawn upon the treasurer for my half year's salary.

I am, Reverend Sir, yours,

And the venerable Society's

Obliged and obedient servant,

JOHN BEACH.

[*Rev. Mr. Johnson to the Secretary.*]

Stratford, in New-England,

May 16th, 1743.

Reverend Sir,

We humbly presume upon the letter you wrote to the Rev. Mr. Morris, relating to Mr. Ebenezer Thomson, the

bearer hereof, to recommend him to the honourable Society for holy orders, and a mission to one part of Mr. Morris' charge, which has grown too extensive and burthensome for him; for, although your letter mentions him only with a view to his being appointed a schoolmaster, yet, considering how much greater necessity there is for ministers than schoolmasters, especially in these times of the great prevalence of enthusiasm and confusion in this country, we humbly hope the Society will be prevailed to admit that he be sent back in holy orders, with a mission, upon such a security as can at present be obtained of £20 sterling per annum by the people of Derby and Oxford; which, although it be not directly a land security, (which they are providing as soon as may be,) yet it may be equally depended upon as though it were so; since we can assure the Society that the men who have undertaken for it are sufficiently responsible, and that every parishioner is, in like manner, obligated to them as they are to the Society, and that they are a people that do truly deserve the Society's favours.

As to Mr. Thomson, we beg leave to give this testimony concerning him, that he has been bred up and received both the degrees of Bachelor and Master of Arts at Yale College, New-Haven, of nine years' standing; and ever since he left the College he has been very laborious, both in suffering much hardship and doing all the good offices he possibly could for promoting the interests of religion and the advancement of the Church of England in these parts, while at the same time he has had a family of his own to provide for, which now consists of a wife and four children, being above thirty years of age, and he has always proved himself a person of a very serious and virtuous life, an orthodox and faithful son of the Church as by law established, and entirely well affected to the present government. We do, therefore, humbly hope the Society will be pleased to admit him into their service, and beg they would inform us by him, when he returns, whether we may not, upon the same foot, recommend two or three more, there being as great a necessity for providing for Simsbury, Waterbury and Ridgefield, not to mention Hebron, which we conclude will be recommended by our brethren

ren in the eastward part of this government; and there are three other valuable candidates that beg leave to be employed as soon as may be, viz., Messrs. Watkins, Cole and Lamson, beside others that might be mentioned. We humbly take leave to subscribe ourselves,

The Society's, and, Reverend Sir,

Your most faithful and obedient humble servants.

[This letter, though written by Mr. Johnson, was in the name of and signed by all the Clergy.]

[Rev. Mr. Caner to the Secretary.]

Fairfield, in New-England,

May 19th, 1743.

Reverend Sir,

It is the chief design of this to lay before the venerable Society my *Not. Paroch.* For the last half year we have had no considerable alterations in the affairs of the Church of Fairfield, every thing remaining quiet and composed; though the constitution of this colony, both civil and ecclesiastical, has received sundry violent shocks from the effects of enthusiasm; but as I don't enter into affairs not immediately under my inspection, I have endeavoured to apply myself with diligence to cultivate a spirit of piety and sound religion among the members of my own charge. As the business of catechising is, confessedly, an important part of the pastoral care, so the experience I have had of its success in bringing both children and adults to a just and worthy apprehension of religion, has encouraged me to proceed in it with greater diligence. It would be of much use, for the furthering and promoting these, my labours, if the venerable Society would be pleased to bestow upon these children a few Catechisms, a dozen or two of Lewis' Exposition of the Catechism, half a dozen of Dr. Bray's Catechetical Instructions, and a dozen

of Common Prayer-Books, with Tate and Brady's Version of the Psalms. I mentioned this request to the venerable Society about a year ago, but not succeeding, the necessity of the children obliges me to repeat it.

I am, with the utmost respect and veneration,

The venerable Society's most dutiful and obedient,

And, Sir, your most humble servant,

HENRY CANER.

[*Ben. Mr. Johnson to the Archbishop of Canterbury.*]

Stratford, in New-England,

May 22d, 1743.

May it please your Grace,

This will wait on your Grace by Mr. Ebenezer Thomson, whom I have several times mentioned to the Society, and who may truly be recommended as a person who (having been bred and graduated in our neighbouring College) has for these several years undergone much hardship and done much service, as far as his lay capacity would admit, in promoting the interest of religion in general, and the Church of England in particular, in these parts, having thought nothing too much to do or suffer that has fallen in his way for the sake of so good a cause, and who now goes home, with a good character from all the Clergy in these parts, in hope of a mission to Derby. But if New-London should be yet a vacancy, I should rather wish him to be sent thither. And on this occasion I humbly entreat your Grace's interest with the Society, that whenever any vacancies happen to be made in this country, either by death or removal, the people may have leave, before they are filled, to procure the Clergy to recommend some young gentleman, if any offers from hence, as there scarcely ever fails to be several (as there are now) who would gladly serve the interests of the Society, to the utmost of their power, at any possible rate, and are generally much

more acceptable to the people, and, consequently, more successful in promoting the great ends of the Society, than those who come hither, strangers to the condition of things in these countries. I beg your Grace will excuse me that I mention this, and that I again suggest the necessity of Bishops, which I have fresh reason to do, from the great prevalence of enthusiasm, and especially that mad sort of it which obtains among the Moravians to the westward, who are likely to make the greater progress, to the unspeakable damage of true religion, by means of having the Episcopal government among them. It is, indeed, very hard, that when enthusiasm and heresy have the advantage of Episcopacy to propagate them, the truth of the orthodox Church of England should not have the like advantage, for the defence and propagation of that. I beg your Grace's prayers and blessing, and remain, may it please your Grace, your Grace's most dutiful son and most obedient, humble servant,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

[*Ben. Mr. Seabury to the Secretary.—Extract.*]

New-London, June 5th, 1743.

Reverend Sir,

But truth obligeth me to say that the prospect of a large Church at Hebron is not so good as formerly, because the followers of Mr. Whitefield, Mr. Tennant, &c., do extremely abound there; the dissenting teacher at Hebron having gone the greatest lengths in pretensions to inspiration and the sensible feeling of the Spirit, as well as into the greatest excesses of meetings almost every day and night. And I should the more rejoice in a resident minister there, because the same spirit of Methodism prevails mightily at New-London, increaseth my care and labours, and renders my absence on Sundays of dangerous consequence. The conformists, both at New-London and Hebron, indeed, are steadfast to the Church,

though they are very much alarmed by the new doctrines and new propagation of religion, the effects of which are really surprising. Those people have meetings in New-London almost every night or day, and 'tis not uncommon (as I am apprised by persons of good sense and integrity) to see ten or more seized at once with violent agitations, many incapable of any decency, crying out for their damned estate, so past speaking at all, or so much, indeed, as being unable to stand, fall down, as they pretend, with the weight of their guilt; and the most of those continuing thus violently exercised (as they say with conviction) but a few hours, do then receive comfort. The Spirit of God, they say, witnesses with their spirits, that they are converted and born again; then follow immediately such raptures and transports of joy as are more surprising than their distresses. New-London has been for a week together in such a tumult that I was afraid the people would have been beside themselves. I have had my house full of people, some under those distresses, and others surprised at the conduct of their neighbours, though I thank God I have never seen any person in this way, but, by cool reasoning and by plain explanations of the terms of reconciliation with God, they have been brought off from their amazing apprehensions to a just notion of the doctrines of repentance and remission of sins; and, beside my attendance at home for many days together on people thus frightened, I have been invited to preach to a numerous congregation at Lyme, about seven or eight miles from New-London, who never heard the Liturgy many of them, and who expressed great satisfaction in my explanation of those doctrines, about which New-England seems at present so much perplexed.

I remain your poor, though faithful servant,

SAMUEL SEABURY.

[*Rev. Mr. Johnson to the Secretary.*]

*Stratford, in New-England,
September 30th, 1743.*

Reverend Sir,

I am most humbly thankful to his Grace and the rest of the honourable Board, for their kind reception of my letters and for the favourable notice they have taken of what I suggested, and the excellent scheme they have concerted for providing for such young men as offer themselves candidates from hence, (of whom the number is still increasing,) as well as that of places where they might be advantageously situated; and people seem, in several places, well disposed to give all the security they can for £20 sterling per annum, and are contriving to lay out uncultivated lands for glebes, which, in the course of time, may be very valuable, though it must be some years before they can be cultivated so as to do much toward the support of an incumbent. An hundred acres have been lately laid out for the perpetual use of the Church, within the bounds of this town, which is now worth about £20 sterling.

I lately opened a new Church at Ripton, where the people hope, in due time, to have some young man to be placed as my assistant. On the Sunday following, the dissenting teacher, one Mills, whose praise is in the journal, being a great admirer of Mr. Whitfield, reviled and declaimed against my sermon, which was on the subject of relative holiness and the reverence due to the house of God. He insisted that there is no more holiness in a Church than under an oak tree, &c.; and soon after some of his followers put his doctrine in practice, by defiling the Church with ordure in several places.

This zealous man gave out, when Mr. Whitfield first appeared, that their employing and encouraging that great reformer would utterly destroy the Church, root and branch; but now finding the event to be the entire reverse of his predictions, he is grown out of all patience with us. In the

mean time, while they are daily spitting out their impotent venom against us, I thank God we have a blessed spirit of peace and charity, and of zeal and unanimity, while every other Christian virtue is happily prevailing among my people, who are carrying on our new Church in the neatest manner, and with great dispatch, it being within a few months raised and now almost covered, and we have had several new families added, and more seem likely to follow them; but I cannot expect any enlargement of my salary from the people here till they have got through the great expense of building.

I am in much concern for the great damage I fear the Church in these parts will sustain by Mr. Seabury's removal, and Mr. Morris' succeeding him at New-London. This gentleman had the misfortune to have but little esteem among the people where he had officiated, and to be much despised by many others. I have faithfully laboured, both with him and them, to prevent this misfortune, but so the event has proved, which put the people of New-London into a terrible consternation, when they heard he was appointed for them, so that they were unwilling to admit him into their Church till his character should be cleared up; and applied to the Commissary to inquire into the grounds of that general disesteem he laboured under, but nothing has yet been done about it. They were advised by the Clergy here, in the meantime, out of duty and gratitude to the Society, to admit him into their Church, which, upon our advice, they immediately did, but yet depend upon the Commissary to take cognizance of the affair. What he proposes to do I have not heard, but whatsoever the result be, (though I earnestly wish otherwise,) I doubt there is little reason to expect the people there will be happy in him, or he in them, and I believe it would be well for both if they were otherwise provided for. New-London is a place of considerable importance to this government, and the Church there was likely to flourish in a good degree; and it grieves me very much, that this unhappy affair should be an hindrance to it. I should not have said this much, but that I have been earnestly solicited by that people to mention something of it, and that it looks unavoid-

able that the Society will be troubled with it first or last; but I shall add no more, unless the Society shall have occasion to inquire of me and my brethren about it, and shall only subjoin my *Not. Paroch.*, which is as follows:

I.	No. of families within the bounds of this town,	400
	I am told, is about.....	
II.	No. of baptised here and in places adjacent by the minister of this town,.....	644
III.	No. since my last, of which three were adults,..	12
IV.	No. of actual communicants here and at Ripton, about.....	170
	Of which, admitted this last half year,.....	10
V.	No. of those that profess the Church, families,..	92
VI.	No., all the rest Presbyterians and Independents, Papists, none.	
VII.	No. of heathens, beside many unbaptised negroes,.....	10
VIII.	No. of converts, &c., no remarkable instance, they being generally a sober, virtuous people.	

I have drawn on the treasurer for my salary to Michaelmas, and remain the Society's most faithful and obliged,

And, Reverend Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

SAM'L JOHNSON.

[*Rev. Mr. Beach to the Secretary.*]

Reading, in New-England,

October 20th, 1743.

Reverend Sir,

I beg the venerable Society's direction in an affair I am just now perplexed with. There are about twenty families professing the Church at New-Milford and New-Fairfield, which are about fifteen miles hence. I preach to them several times in a year, but seldom on the Lord's day. They frequently come to Church at Newtown, but, by reason of the

distance, they can't attend constantly, and their families very seldom, and, when they can't come to Church, they meet together in their own town, and one of their number reads some part of the common prayer and a sermon. They are now building a Church, and hope in time to have a minister settled among them. But the Independents, to suppress this design in its infancy, having the authority in their hands, have lately prosecuted and fined them for their meeting to worship God according to the common prayer, and the same punishment they are like to suffer for every offence in this kind, although it is the common approved practice of the same Independents to meet for worship in their own way when they have no minister; but what is a virtue in them is a crime in our people. The same is like to be the case in many other towns, in which people professing the Church are so far distant from a settled minister, that they cannot constantly attend the worship of God with him.

The case of these people is very hard; if, on the Lord's day, they continue at home, they must be punished; if they meet to worship God according to the Church of England in the best manner they can, their mulct is still greater; and if they go to the Independent meeting in the town where they live, they must endure the mortification of hearing the doctrine and worship of the Church vilified, and the important truths of Christianity obscured and enervated by enthusiastic and antinomian dreams. Now I should be thankful if the venerable Society would direct me what course to advise these people to, and if I might receive a particular instruction to take care of those professing the Church in New-Milford and New-Fairfield as part of my parish. I believe it would put me into a better capacity to protect them from the insults of their Independent neighbours. I have, this half year, baptised eighteen children, and admitted several more persons to the Lord's Supper. The inclosed is the state of my parish. I have this day drawn for my half year's salary.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Yours and the Society's

Most obedient servant,

JOHN BEACH.

[Rev. Mr. Carter to the Secretary.—Extract.]

*Fairfield, in New-England,
November 30th, 1743.*

My parish has received no diminution and but little increase since my last; I beg leave, therefore, to refer to my *notitia parochialis* inclosed for what may be expected as to the present state of the Church in Fairfield. At Norwalk, Stamford and Ridgefield, where my brother chiefly officiates, there have been large accessions made to the Church of late, chiefly of persons who appear to have a serious sense of religion, and whose good example will, I trust, have a happy influence upon others. Where the late spirit of enthusiasm has most abounded, the Church has received the largest accession. Many of those deluded people, having lost themselves in the midst of error, wearied in the pursuit, as their passions subsided, sought for rest in the bosom and communion of the Church; and others, reflecting upon the weakness of their former dependence, which left them exposed to such violent disorders, have likewise thought proper to take shelter under the wings of the Church. Norwalk, Stamford, and the neighbouring towns, have been much visited with this spiritual malady, but at Fairfield it has never obtained by Mr. Whitfield, has been often attempted to be introduced by Mr. Whitfield, and many of his followers. An epidemical sickness has prevailed in the towns last mentioned this fall, and, among others, my brother has been confined by it above two months, which has greatly increased my burthen, the care of all these western Churches thus falling upon me, so that my time has been wholly taken up in visiting the sick and preaching from town to town.

[*The Churchwardens of Wallingford to the Secretary.*]

Wallingford, in New-England,

December 1st, 1743.

Reverend Sir,

We, the inhabitants of Wallingford, members of the Church of England, make bold on behalf of ourselves and at the request of our brethren inhabiting in the neighbouring towns of Guilford and Branford, to inform you that we are twenty-five masters of families that are members of said Church, and meet together every Lord's day and edify ourselves, as well as we can, by reading; and while the Reverend Mr. Morris was in these parts, we were edified to our great comfort; our number then increased, and many more were coming in to join us, but he being removed from us, and Mr. J. Lyon cannot attend us, we are now desitute, and our dissenting brethren from year to year are distressing us with executions for meeting-houses, rates, steeples, and bells for them; so that our present melancholy circumstances crave your good offices with the honourable Society. We are willing to do the best we can toward the support of a minister, and make no doubt but in two or three years' time we shall be able to raise £20 sterling per annum toward the support of a minister. We humbly pray we may be assisted with a minister, and, might we choose for ourselves, we having experienced the Rev. Mr. Morris, would heartily wish he might be the person; and could a method be found for quelling the perpetual demands of our dissenting brethren for meeting-houses, rates, &c., it would greatly add to the growth and consolation of our distressed Churches, and we, as in duty bound, shall ever pray.

HENRY BATES, } *Churchwardens,*
JOHN WAED, } *and several others.*

[*Rev. Dr. Johnson to the Secretary.*]

Stratford, in New-England,

January 10th, 1743-4.

Reverend Sir,

I most humbly thank you for your good offices to Mr. Thomson, and for your kind and affectionate letter by him, and your readiness therein expressed, to do any thing in your power toward promoting the interest of our holy religion and the best of Churches in these parts of the world; and, among other things, I was much obliged to you for what you kindly suggested to Mr. Thomson about the report you had heard of my going to meetings, and suffering my son to do so; and I beg leave to make my apology, and explain to you the truth of this matter, and entreat you would make that use of it, in my behalf, which you shall think proper, and may seem to you needful; and even to read this letter to the Society, if there appears to you occasion for it, in order that I may be freed from any mischief that may arise to me from any misrepresentations that may have been laid before them; for, I find I have enemies disposed to do me a damage, and those, I believe, some whom I have endeavoured to serve to my utmost, and for whom my tenderness and compassion has sometimes put me upon doing kind offices, even when I had too much reason to fear the public might suffer by it, ^{an} instance of which may possibly come into your hands. It is true Mr. Morris, in his great zeal, did complain of me to the Convention on those accounts, but I wrote to the Commissary, and gave him such an account of my conduct as I presume satisfied him, he having never remarked any thing to me, to the contrary, since.

As to my own going to meeting, the fact is, I did go to hear Mr. Whitfield once, which I presumed it would not be offensive for me to do, he being in orders in our Church, and not then under any censure: and, indeed, I thought it my

duty so to do, that I might be under the better advantage to prevent the mischief I apprehended from him and his followers among the people; and the event has proved that I have, by this means, been under the greater advantage to withstand and quiet the late madness and enthusiasm that has prevailed among us, and make it turn to the great increase of the Church.

It was for the same reason that I, with two or three of my brethren of the Clergy, went one night in the dark, and perfectly *incognito*, among a vast crowd, to see and hear Davenport's managements, whom we heard rave about a quarter of an hour, and then went away, without having been known there; and twice in my travels, by mere accident, I happened, in the night, (for these mad meetings were chiefly in the night,) to come unexpectedly upon private houses where these wild meetings were carrying on, but soon left them, unknown; by which means I happened to be an eye-witness of those strange doings, which I gave the Society an account of, and have since made an advantage of my observations on those occasions to their confusion. Such have been the instances of my going to meeting, for which I have been faulted by some over-zealous people, whose venomous spirit toward the Dissenters has very much hurt the Church, while I have made the best advantage of what I observed, and with very good success, to do her service; and this much for myself.

As to my son, it is indeed a great mortification to him and me, that I am obliged to send him to a dissenting College, or deny him any public education at all; and rather than deny him a collegiate education, I confess I do not forbid him going to meeting when he can't help it, to which he is himself so averse, that nothing but mere necessity would put him upon it. He comes home to Church once in three weeks or a month, at least, at the communion, if possible, being fourteen miles distant, and as often as there is Church there, he goes to West Haven, which is four miles distant; at other times he stays at home in his chamber as much as he can, and the rector and tutors indulge him as much as they dare, being friendly disposed to serve me as much as they are able

without hazarding the resentment of the government that supports them. This is the fact with respect to my son. And after all, if my method of proceeding is not what the Society approves of, I am heartily willing to stand corrected, and entirely to conform to their instructions, and in hopes of a line from you, on this subject, for my direction.

I remain, Reverend Sir,

Your most obliged and obedient,

Humble servant,

SAM'L JOHNSON.

P. S.—Since my last, here is an ingenious gentleman, one Mr. Prince, of very considerable learning, having been fifteen years a fellow of Harvard College, in Cambridge, who has conformed to the Church, and lives at present in this town, and desires to serve the Church in holy orders, and would willingly go home in the spring; and here is an honest neighbouring dissenting teacher, who will very soon appear for the Church, and probably bring the greatest part of his congregation with him, and I wish it may be in the Society's power to settle a small pension upon him, and send him back in holy orders to his people, if he should wait on them for that purpose.

Yours, as above,

S. J.

[Clergy of Connecticut to the Secretary.—Extract.]

Norwalk, March 28th, 1744.

Reverend Sir,

And we can with the same integrity recommend the people of Stamford, Greenwich and Horse Neck, whose petition for a minister to reside among them was laid before the Society by the Rev'd Isaac Brown, when he went home for orders. These people have been much persecuted by the dissenting

government, for when they would have rewarded the Rev. Mr. Wetmore for his monthly attendance in officiating among them, by paying their proportion of the rates, according to an express law of the colony, they were prevented by a very oppressive judgment of the court; and though they have been put to great difficulties, yet the Church has much increased, especially since Mr. Richard Caner was sent to Norwalk, and there is a good prospect of their increasing much more, if they can obtain Mr. Miner to settle among them, now the confusions of Methodism are prevailing, as they have done very much of late, in that part of the government.

Mr. Miner is a gentleman well qualified to serve that people, and they have an earnest desire to obtain him. He is a late convert from the Dissenters, convinced of the necessity of conformity, chiefly by occasion of the late mischiefs of enthusiasm. He was for above twelve years a teacher among the Dissenters, much esteemed by them both for his preaching and good behaviour.

We subscribe, with our humblest duty to the Society,

Reverend Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servants,

S. JOHNSON,

RICHARD CANER,

JAS. WETMORE,

JAMES LYONS,

HENRY CANER.

[*Churchwardens, at Simsbury, to the Society.—Extrad.*]

Simsbury, April 10th, 1744.

Reverend Sir,

We have built a convenient Church, and purchased a glebe of fifty acres adjacent to our Church, and in good order; we have been a Society for four years, and have almost constantly for that time carried on sermons and a form of prayer, and yet, notwithstanding all this, the Independents, by force and under a pretence of authority, have carried away our

estates, to support their teachers, to build their meeting-houses, and procure their parsonages. Enthusiasm and error have much prevailed among us; but of late they have run into parties, so that, in a meeting-house adjacent to us, they cannot agree about calling a teacher, and many of them and of our neighbours, by the occasional visits of the Reverend Mr. Lyons, incline to the Church, having nothing so much to object against as the want of a settled minister. Our Clergy have advised us to Mr. Gibbs, as a modest, virtuous gentleman and well qualified to serve us, but as we are not able to support him suitably to the dignity of that station and character, we trust that the venerable Society, in their great wisdoms, will allow us their charitable assistance.

We are, Reverend Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servants,

WILLIAM CASE,

JNO. CHRISTIAN MILLER, } *Churchwardens.*

[*Rev. Mr. Punderson to the Secretary.—Extrad.*]

N. Groton, April 9th, 1744.

Reverend Sir,

As I am at present the only missionary in this half of the government and part of Rhode Island, I would earnestly recommend it to the venerable Board, as soon as possible, to supply the vacancy at New-London, and, if possible, to erect a mission at Stonington and Charlestown, where the harvest would, undoubtedly, be very plentiful, were there a resident labourer of a virtuous character. I preached at Charlestown last Sunday to a considerable congregation.

I am, Reverend Sir, yours,

And the Society's real friend and servant,

EBEN'R PUNDERSON.

[*Rev. Mr. Lyons to the Secretary.—Extract.*]

Derby, May 8th, 1744.

Reverend Sir,

At a place called Guilford, where there are two Independent congregations in the compact part of the town, and where, also, the worship of our Church has not till lately made its entrance, I have preached several times, baptised three children, and eight families (consisting of thirty-six children beside adults) have declared their conformity, and in testimony thereof, have subscribed a paper which I formed for that purpose, and many of them have occasionally communicated since that time. At Milford and New-Haven there are a few members of our Church, but care is taken, at the last of those places especially, that they should not increase, the rector and tutors of the College there having, of late, suffered none of the students (except the children of professed Churchmen) to attend my lectures. At West Haven I have baptised two children and officiated frequently. At Derby and Oxford I have had sixteen new communicants, at the last of which places I have baptised seven children, and catechised at Derby; but having committed the care of registering the baptisms there to one of the Churchwardens, he obstinately refused to show me the lists, which naturally induces me to present my venerable patrons with a short sketch of my grievances at this same Derby. As soon as they had advice of my appointment, and from what country I came, and, indeed, before I arrived among them, they abused me, calling me an "Irish Teague and Foreigner," with many other reflections of an uncivilized and unchristian kind; they boasted they should soon discover me, meaning, I suppose, they would either find or fasten some thing upon me relating to my character or conduct whereby they might get rid of me. Under these disadvantages I entered on that part of my mission, but, by care and diligence, conciliated myself to them, 'till the Reverend Mr. Thompson, of Scituate, came

up amongst them, whose conduct kindled a fire that is not extinguished. In my absence, and while he was among them, they appointed a vestry without my privy, and let me know nothing of their intents till four days before that meeting, of their own appointment; meanwhile, they secreted from me the Society's letter, and when I insisted on seeing it, asserted they had no occasion to consult me, nor make me privy to their purposes, so I did not see it till two days before that meeting. From Mr. Thompson's conduct and theirs, I became clearly convinced that they were mutually of the mind to bring him into my mission. At their instance, I indicated a regular vestry, and at that, the appointment of a committee to find a suitable tract of land for a glebe. I encouraged them all in my power, and exhorted them to order, peace and unanimity, but to little effect, for at a vestry held in Easter Week, some of their leading men asserted they would not assist in getting a glebe unless on condition to have their own countryman to fill the Church. They alleged they were acquainted with the venerable Society's mind in that matter, which, they said, had left them to their choice, and had agreed to make it a rule that every country should be furnished with missionaries of their own raising (as they phrase it.) It would be too tedious to record all the abuse and insults I have received at Derby; so many and so severe, that some of themselves, more moderate than the rest, remonstrated to them the danger they were in of losing the mission by their abuses to me. They answered, they did not care if it was sunk, they could soon renew it, and had rather have it sunk in the deepest part of the sea than have it in an itinerancy; though I have officiated in that place above one-third of my time, and am, through God's goodness, hitherto irrevocable in doctrine and practice. My New-England brethren of the Clergy here are so fond of their own countrymen that, were there never so much occasion for it, either here or at the Board, they would be at little pains to do my character justice; and in a little time they hope to get rid of missionaries that are not country born, or, at least, that no more of European education be sent; and then what face the Church here will put on, is as easy as it is unpleasant to foresee. If

the insults of Derby are not redressed, it will be in vain to send any European, especially into this colony, whether as resident or itinerant.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

JAMES LYONS.

[*Rev. Mr. Caner to the Secretary.—Extract.*]

Fairfield, in New-England,

May 10th, 1744.

Reverend Sir,

The present state of my own parish does not yield me all the satisfaction I could wish. The late enthusiasm never made much progress here, and, indeed, the temper of the people is generally rather faulty in the other extreme, a cold Laodicean disposition, an inconsiderate neglect of the great duties of religion, a visible deadness and formality, is what, at present, gives me most concern, and prevents the success of my administrations.

I am, Reverend Sir, your most obedient,

And most humble servant,

HENRY CANER.

[*NOTE.*—It may be a question worth examination, whether the enthusiasm complained of was not, in its reactionary effect, the occasion, if not the cause, of the Laodicean coldness complained of.]

The Members of the Church in Northbury to the Secretary.]

Northbury, May 28th, 1744.

The representation and humble petition of the members of the Church of England, in Northbury, in the township of Waterbury, in the colony of Connecticut, in New-England, and the members of said Church, dwelling in other places nearly adjoining, humbly sheweth :

We were all educated in this land, under the instruction of Independent teachers, or (as they would be called) Presbyterians; and consequently, we were prejudiced strongly against the Church of England from our cradles, until we had the advantage of books from your Reverend missionaries and others, whereby we began to see with our own eyes that things were not as they had been represented to our view; and Mr. Whitfield, passing through this land, condemning all but his adherents, and his followers and imitators, by their insufferable enthusiastick whims and extemporaneous jargon, brought in such a flood of confusion amongst us, that we became sensible of the unscriptural method we had always been accustomed to take in our worship of God, and of the weakness of the pretended constitution of the Churches (so called) in this land; whereupon, we fled to the Church of England for safety, and are daily more and more satisfied we are safe, provided the purity of our hearts and lives be conformable to her excellent doctrine; and that it is the best constituted Church this day in the world.

HENRY COOK,

BARNABY FORD,

ISAAC CASTEL,

JOHN HOW,

THOMAS CLASELEE.

[*Rev. Mr. Caner to the Secretary.—Extract.*]

Fairfield, in New-England,

November 13th, 1744.

Reverend Sir,

We daily expect a new storm from the daily irregular excursions of Mr. Whitfield; he has not yet begun his progress, having been under afflictions for the loss of his only child, and, since that, visited with dangerous sickness himself; his sickness still continues, and whether it shall please God to continue him a scourge to these Churches is yet uncertain.

[*Rev. Mr. Johnson to the Secretary.—Extract.*]

Stratford, in New-England,

February 12th, 1744-5.

Reverend Sir,

I observe the Society has come to a resolution not to receive any for the future, without liberty first obtained for them to go home, &c. This order, as far as I was concerned, I shall dutifully observe; but, as it is expressed in the most general terms, I beg leave to ask whether it is to be understood of any at all, even though their view were only to supply any vacancy that may happen, or whether it be not rather the Society's meaning, that none shall go with a view to any new mission to be erected, without leave first obtained. It is of this last case, I humbly presume, the Society would be understood, because it would seem hard, and might be very detrimental to the Church, for the people to be so long destitute, as the time would require to send and receive the Society's answer.

I humbly hope this resolution of the Society will not be understood to look back so as to defeat the hopes of Messrs. Miner and Lamson, when it shall please God to deliver them from their captivity.*

As to Mr. Prince, who is now teaching a school, all I can say of him from my own knowledge is, that ever since he has been in those parts, which is now almost two years, his behaviour has been not only entirely unexceptionable, but very amiable. He was, it is true, rejected from Harvard College, but I understood it not to be from immorality, but for his resolutely, and, perhaps, too warmly adhering to what he thought right, and publishing his reasons (not since answered) in a controversy among them relating to the government of the College; which occasioned, indeed, great obloquy

* They had probably been captured on their passage, and carried prisoners to France, as several of those who went for orders were.

against him, and made the Convention doubtful about employing him, but they at length came to this conclusion, (if I remember right,) that if he brought sufficient certificates of his good behaviour for two years from that time, which was last May, they should be willing to recommend him. As to his writing against the three creeds, it is utterly groundless; all the pretence for it was, that about twelve years ago he published a piece upon the resurrection of Christ, wherein he has a slant of two or three words about composing creeds, or something to that effect, and he told me at that time he had imbibed some loose latitudinarian notions from reading Chubb, and the Independent Whig, &c., which he had long since been convinced were very erroneous, of which he gave satisfaction to Dr. Cutler by a letter to him. However, as to all these things, I beg leave to refer you to the Rev. Mr. Davenport, a very worthy member of the Society, now going home, who is much better acquainted with what concerns Mr. Prince, in that government, than I am.

I remain, Reverend Sir,

Your most faithful and most obedient servant,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

[*Rev. Mr. Johnson to the Secretary.—Extract.*]

Stratford, in New-England,

March 30th, 1745.

Reverend Sir,

And as there is such a growing disposition among the people in many places to forsake the tenets of enthusiasm and confusion, so there is a like disposition increasing in the College, where there are already ten children of the Church, and several sons of dissenting parents, that are much inclined to conform. I was there last week, and was much pleased with their exercises; among the rest, there was one layman, a person of good character, (beside Messrs. Marsh and Mansfield, mentioned in my last,) who desired me to mention him to the

Society as a candidate for the ministry. Thus, *the harvest is large and the labourers not a few*, who would gladly be employed, and be content with as moderate wages as can be thought tolerable, whenever the Society shall be in a disposition to employ them, or any of them.

Though the madness of the late enthusiasm has much abated, the venom of it still continues, and, I fear, rather increases, and operates in a violent manner in many places against the Church; so that no sooner does any person in authority appear for the Church, but he is soon displaced, and some bitter creature set up by the government in his room; and in some places, notwithstanding the law they had made in our favour, they have of late taxed the lands of the Church people in common with the Dissenters, toward the support of their ministers. I have myself lately had no less than ten pounds of our money forced from me, toward maintaining three of the worst creatures in the government, being taxes raised upon some lands I had in the places where they were teachers. But what I would mention as the greatest grievance of this kind, is the case of the Church people at Derby, who are forced to pay such a land tax in their own town to a dissenting teacher and meeting-house in one of their villages, (when they have a Church of their own to finish and a minister to provide for,) the amount of which, in the whole, will be very considerable.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your most obliged, obedient, humble servant,

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

[*Rev. Mr. Lyons to the Secretary.—Extract.*]

New-Haven, May 30th, 1745.

Reverend Sir,

The conformists at West Haven increase, and they have almost finished the Church. In many other places (too tedious to mention) our Church begins to gain ground in

spite of many disadvantages. At Wallingford and Cheshire, the Dissenters take, by distress, the Churchmen's estates, to build, repair, and keep clean their meeting-houses; and, though they have had several trials in our courts, they always lose their cases. The people of Derby still continue divided by a national spirit that prevails, and is industriously propagated by some of them and the neighbouring Clergy; however, after all attempts made, and unchristian means used, by some to render me unacceptable, (by hauling me once and again before an Independent justice of the peace, as I mentioned in some former account,) yet, through the goodness of God, my innocence and integrity protected me, and I continue irreprovable, having a good understanding with the most of my extensive mission, and even with many of Derby, who are grieved with the irregular proceedings of that National party.

I am, Reverend Sir, yours, &c., &c.,

JAMES LYONS.

[*Rev. Mr. Gibbs to the Secretary.—Extract.*]

Simsbury, June 26th, 1745.

Reverend Sir,

The Church seems to be in a promising condition, and I am not without hope that there will be a great increase in time. I have now twenty communicants, and have baptised eight. The Churchmen here have been much oppressed by the Dissenters, who have taken from them seventy pounds toward building their meeting-house and settling their minister.

I remain, Sir,

Your most humble and obedient servant,

WILLIAM GIBBS.

